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SPEECHES AND INTERVIEWS

VOLUME 1

SHEIKH MOHD. ABUDLLAH

SPEECHES
&
INTERVIEWS

by

Sher-i-Kashmir
Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah

after

HIS RELEASE ON 2 JAN. 1968



"A country ultimately is not known by its vast resources and large size but by its adherence to its pledges and to human values".

Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah

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INTRODUCTION

In the early hours of Idul-Fitar, I was at the breakfast table with Sher-i-Kashmir and his family. The Deputy Commissioner stepped in and with a smile, said "double Mubarak". For a moment I thought one was for me. But no. Both were for Sheikh Saheb: Mubarak for Id and Mubarak for his unconditional release. "What next?" I whispered to him. "We have to solve our problem, and anger is no solution": thus spoke this stalwart beloved leader of Kashmir who had just completed almost unbroken period of 14 years of incarceration since the subcontinent achieved independence. Here was an inexhaustable reservoir of strength born of unshakeable faith, which has inspired me and the whole Kashmiri people for the last thirtyfive years.

He has since spoken at length, addressed press gatherings, reception ceremonies, mass rallies like those at Patna and Meerut, students' meetings and many diverse functions, the substance of which is published in this booklet.

Herein are raised many questions and problems that confront both India and the sub-continent, amongst which the Indo-Pak relations stand out conspicuously. Both countries which only 20 years ago were one indivisible unit, are today in the grip of cold-war embittering their relations, hampering their progress, threatening their peace and gradually bringing them to the brink of disaster. Two wars have been fought and though the escape has been miracloous but the toll has been heavy. A third conflict, warns the Sheikh may wipeout the both and may even engulf into devastating flames the whole of Asia. Both have entered into the suicidal race for arms, borrowing colossal amounts from foreign countries, which in turn will break the very back of their peoples and may even enslave them once again. In both countries, Sheikh Saheb pleads, millions are facing starvation and abject

poverty is staring them full in the face. How will progeny forgive you? asks Sheikh. Remove with love the causes of friction that divide you into hostile camps, and in this "India should behave like a big brother with generosity, creating confidence amongst its small neighbours". But will India listen?

"The main cause of friction is Kashmir, which must be put out of the way, settling it by negotiations." The Sheikh recalls the promises and pledges made to the people of Kashmir and to world at large and pleads for their implementation in a peaceful manner. Gandhiji knew how to honour the plighted word, reminds the Sheikh. It was the departed leader who staked his life when in 1947 Indian Government thought of withholding money held in trust for Pakistan. "You hold it in trust" warned Gandhiji, "and if you don't pay I shall make penance by offering my life for your breach of promise." It was high ideals like this that attracted Kashmir to India. "But what is your position today" asks Sheikh, "that Pakistan has entered into military pacts with foreign powers and, therefore, Kashmiris are deprived of the right of self-determination, is to punish Peter for the sins of Paul." What crime have the Kashmiris committed? They are subjected to persecution and prosecution. Their leader and thousands others have suffered long incarceration extending to 14 years. Yet Indian leaders ask why have the people of Kashmir been estranged from India? "Because," replies Sheikh, "You have given up Gandhian ways". Third degree methods will not avail you. Kashmir has been sandwiched between the impassible route of Banihal and completely blocked road of Pindi for the last two decades. The people of Kashmir have suffered from worst type of privations and miseries almost wiping them out economically. But who cares for them? Indian government has even failed to give them free elections, rule of law or even clean administration. Insecurity and instability hangs like the Sword of Damocles over their heads. In short, "Soul of Kashmir has been suffocated", as Shri Ashok Mehta put it. Do you still hope that Kashmiris should befriend you? "There are, however, good souls like Rajaji,

Vinobaji, J. P. and others in India." But will India heed their word?

Sheikh has pointedly drawn the attention of the Indian leaders to the fast deteriorating conditions in India. The language, food and above all continuously shifting political loyalties forbode a serious doom and a grim future. "If Indian leaders do not awake now, and set their own house in order, the future may bring complete disaster", warns Sheikh. It is no use putting under the carpet your problems. He pleads for determination and will to resolve the problems. Kashmir is not intractable, in case we handle it with good faith and without ill-will or rancour. If we could find an honourable and acceptable solution for the river waters and the boundary disputes, we could hammer out an honourable and equitable settlement for Kashmir also. To say that we have to live with the problem, is both callous and defeatist. "The basic thing, remember", Sheikh Saheb points out "is the well being of the people of Kashmir and that no power on earth can for all time deny the right of self-determination of a people."

The question of Sheikh Saheb's nationality was raked during a press conference. "It is an irrelevant question," answered the Sheikh. For sure, it is irrelevant. Sheikh Saheb has been a co-author of Article 370 and has signed the Constitution of India.

To the Indian Muslims Sheikh Saheb has given the brotherly advice: "Live in unity according to the tenets of Islam. Love and be loyal to the country you live in. Remember the examples set by the freedom fighters which your community produced."

Sheikh Saheb has repeatedly drawn attention to that treaty of peace known as the Tashkent Declaration, and has pleaded for concrete action to give meaning and purpose to that historic document produced by outstanding statesmen like Kosygin, Shastri and Ayub. Any departure from Tashkent spirit may lead the two countries to complete ruin.

It is a sheer exercise in futility to aver that, "Pakistan is not a party in the Kashmir dispute". With whom was the ceasefire agreement made, who was the party in Security Council resolutions and decisions and who was the party who signed the Tashkent Declaration? It was Pakistan that loomed large in numerous Indo-Pak conferences on Kashmir. "Can you wipe out history?" asks the Sheikh. "We may think like a fool", goes an English saying, "but we should not act like one". In 1965 almost in the thick of war, Vinoba referring to the Indian Government's claim that Kashmir is settled and therefore not negotiable, said, "It can only be said to be settled when India, Pakistan, people of Kashmir and the world at large admit it as settled".

U Thant has sometimes ago reminded that Kashmir is still on the agenda of Security Council. Let us not therefore befool ourselves and act as ostriches.

Indian leaders sometimes say that we should be realistic. I plead with them to be realistic themselves. To forget right of self-determination is not to be realistic. How can millions of Kashmiris ignore the two decade old history of this oozing sore which is eating into their very vitals? How can they forget that Pakistan has been accepted and treated by India as a party and all along as an active party? It is at our very door and has been very much in the dispute since its inception. Could during the last twenty years India succeed in ignoring it? We plead for a peaceful solution that will ensure lasting settlement and progress and well being for the people of Kashmir. As Sheikh Saheb has put it, "We want nobody's honour to be compromised".

With these words I commend to the readers this record of Sheikh Saheb's speeches given here and plead with every patriot to help awaken the human conscience in order to resolve this dispute and free this sub-continent from the potential danger of grave threat to peace.

Mirza Mohammed Afzal Beg,

Dated: Feb 15, 1968.

Mujahid Manzil,
Srinagar—Kashmir.

President,

All Jammu and Kashmir
Plebiscite Front.

Interviews

ON RELEASE

(2nd January 1968)

On January 2, 1968, at No. 3 Kotla Lane where Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah had been interned under the Defence of India Rules, Mr. B.N. Tandon, the Deputy Commissioner of Delhi, served the Government of India Order at 8.40 a.m. on the Sheikh whereby all restrictions were removed on him and he was released unconditionally. At that time there were pressmen and a few photographers on the lawn with whom Sheikh Saheb had a brief chat. He said :

“I hope that Smt. Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister, would allow the threads to be picked up where in 1964 they had been snapped due to Panditji's death; and that the Indo-Pak amity mission will be permitted to be pursued so that the two countries will resolve amicably their disputes through friendly negotiations.

“I would try that both countries may establish friendly relations between them and if you permit me to say so, I would pressurize them into falling in love with each other.”

Replying to a question the Sheikh said that he had no cut and dried solution for the problem of Kashmir. “I am a supporter of Indo-Pakistan friendship and through that friendship a solution for Kashmir will emerge. But I will plan out my programme after meeting Mrs. Gandhi.”

PRESS CONFERENCE

On 4th January 1968 Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah addressed the first Press conference on the lawns of No. 3 Kotla Lane, New Delhi. The conference was attended by more than 150 representatives of leading papers and news agencies and television, both Indian and foreign, besides distinguished friends of Sheikh Sahib. Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah started by reading out the following statement :

“To the large number of members of Parliament from both Houses and of all parties who signed a representation for my release I owe a debt of gratitude. I am glad that the Government of India decided in response to that representation to withdraw the restrictive orders served on me in May 1965. I must also refer to the part played by several eminent friends outside Parliament who persistently worked for the same objective. While I cannot mention all, I must single out Rajaji and Shri Jaya Prakash Narayan, Shri Shiva Rao and Shri J.J. Singh for their hearty support.

“I can assure you that notwithstanding the many years of my incarceration, I have no rancour in my heart. Personal liberty, after nearly fourteen years of unjust detention, weighs far less with me than the release of forces that will advance the cause of friendship between India and Pakistan.

“India is facing today a serious crisis, with many difficult problems which appear to baffle the best efforts of her leaders. Her relations with Pakistan have been marked by conflicts and misunderstandings for two decades, and vast funds, which should be devoted to the progress of education, health, agriculture and social welfare in general, are now diverted by both countries towards the production of destructive weapons of warfare.

“I am anxious to consecrate the years that lie ahead of me to foster peace and friendship between India and Pakistan. I am convinced that along the path we have trodden

for the last 20 years, there is nothing but suffering, hatred and misery for the hundreds of millions living in this sub-continent.

“By a fortunate co-incidence in a few days’ time will come the second anniversary of the Tashkent declaration. Two statesmen, watching their respective countries on the brink of disaster, resolved in that noble charter of aims and objectives to seek joint collaboration in many spheres of human endeavour.

“I am certain that the peoples of India and Pakistan would welcome nothing more eagerly than an era of peace and mutual assistance. High prices, shortage of essential commodities and a sense of deepening frustration and despair have been the lot of the vast majority in the two countries ever since the dawn of independence. But not only of India and Pakistan; the people of Kashmir have paid even more dearly for the unhappy relationship between the two countries and are anxious therefore to participate actively in the restoration of goodwill.

“Mahatma Gandhi pleaded with all his earnestness for a treaty of friendship between the two countries so that partition need not mean strife. He pleaded in vain. The forces of hatred proved too much twenty years ago and engulfed both countries in deep turmoil. No tribute can be more meaningful to Gandhiji’s memory than a nationwide effort to infuse life and reality into the Tashkent declaration.

“I hope to make my humble contribution towards building up such an effort, in India, in Pakistan and in Kashmir.

“I must seek the advice and co-operation of my friends all over India, before I draw up my programme of activities. I am anxious, as soon as I can, to renew contacts with my people in Kashmir from whom I have been separated for two-and-a-half years.

“They have undergone during this period untold suffering and have made great sacrifice for their rights and liberties. Repressive laws can never solve any human problems; they

only drive discontent deeper into the souls of their victims. If my release has any significance, I hope the release of all political prisoners and detenus will follow without delay and the removal from the statute-book of all laws that make suppression of human liberty and freedom of expression in Kashmir possible.

“As long as I live, my life will be dedicated to the cause of Indo-Pakistan friendship and of inter-racial and inter-religious unity. Regarding Kashmir I would say that in such friendship between India and Pakistan lies the hope of my State's peace and prosperity.”

This was followed by questions and answers, the substance of which is reproduced below :

Q. In 1952 you were confident that the progressive elements were with you, but later on you were dubbed as reactionary and foreign agent.

He wants to locate me. He says that different people say different things about me. Some have been dubbing me as a British agent, some as an American agent, then some have dubbed me as a Chinese agent, some people say, you are a Muslim. He wants to locate the lion. Well, you can locate me in my den.

Q. Are you an Indian national ?

I am not going to reply to this question ; it is irrelevant.

Q. Would you please spell out your concrete plan ?

As far as my plan is concerned, probably you all know that Panditji invited me to Delhi for talks in 1964 after I was released from jail. We had long discussions and came to the conclusion that this question (Kashmir) must be resolved somehow with the cooperation of Pakistan, so that both countries can progress. He strongly felt the urge for resolving the question in his life-time. He was very keen and so a plan was formulated; the first thing was to persuade President Ayub Khan to have friendly talks at the Conference table with

Panditji and resolve this conflict. With his blessings I went to Pakistan and I must thank President Ayub Khan who consented to come to Delhi and try to sort out things. But unfortunately Panditji died and the whole thing stopped at that. Later on the leaders who succeeded Panditji took quite a different line. They did not pick up the threads. The result is before you. Now after 2½ years of experimenting probably they have come to this conclusion that in this way does not lie peace and no progress can be made. Perhaps that has influenced them to release me: I do not know yet as I have not been able to contact the Prime Minister. I shall be meeting her this evening. I am quite sure that Indiraji knows the wishes of her father and I hope that she will pick up the threads. If there is the desire to settle this problem amicably, my services are at her disposal to achieve that end. Despite what I have suffered because I am dedicated to an ideal.

Q. Do you want confederation between India and Pakistan ?

No, there is no formula. Any formula which will bring about peace and amity and friendship between India and Pakistan will be welcome.

Q. But can't you spell out your plan ?

That depends on what attitude I find here. I cannot be certain about it.

Q. Amity between the two countries, India and Pakistan, can come only in stages. Will there be place in your plan for resumption of trade and commerce and freedom of movement between the two countries ?

That is a question of procedure. The basic thing is the mutual desire to live as friends. The path of hatred and strife should be given up. If that desire is there, naturally I will help.

Q. After your discussions with Panditji, you went to Pakistan. You had talks with President Ayub Khan and then

the threads were to be picked up. But after Indo-Pak war in 1965 don't you think there was an adverse influence ?

This war has highlighted the urgency of having a peaceful settlement of the problem. Everybody would admit that the war has decided nothing ; nothing but hatred has been gained. Not an inch of territory has been gained by either side. Therefore this matter should be resolved by the two sides like brothers around a Conference table.

Q. But has not the wars napped Jawaharlal Nehru's initiative ?

Absolutely not. It has highlighted that initiative.

Q. You have mentioned the names of JP and Rajaji. I take it that you have read the statements issued by them in the last few days, one yesterday and the other two days ago, that this (Kashmir) problem has to be solved as between Delhi and Srinagar. Do you subscribe to that ?

This is a problem to be solved between India, Pakistan and Kashmir. They do not say what you ascribe to spirit. them. At least I have not understood their statement in that They feel that we must talk to the people of Kashmir, see what are the possibilities, satisfy the people of Kashmir and then talk with Pakistan. The main factor is the people of Kashmir. If the people of Kashmir are to be satisfied, then it would be easy to talk to Pakistan. How are you going to satisfy the people of Kashmir ? They are not aspiring for the moon. They want peace; give them peace. Convince them with whatever plan you have in your mind. Then alone Pakistan can be faced. But first convince us. You fight the people of Kashmir and you fight the people of Pakistan. That is no way at all.

Q. Is it possible for you to indicate some broad proposals of how Pakistan President's mind is working ?

We did not deal with the matter that way. The formula, we felt, could be evolved only by mutual discussions.

It is very difficult to commit oneself to a concrete formula this way or that; but then there are some broad principles I enunciated at that time and President Ayub Khan agreed to that and I had discussed those broad principles with Panditji. The formula should be such as would not create more difficulties. I had said probably that the formula should not be such as would shake the very basis on which the Indian leaders are trying to build up India, the secular character of India. All these things have to be taken into consideration and then we must think about what would be the best formula that can be suitable.

Q. In your statement you have said 'I hope to contribute towards building up such an atmosphere in India, Pakistan and Kashmir'. Do you think these are three separate countries?

It is not a question of separate countries. Of course, India and Pakistan are free, they are sovereign states and the State of Kashmir is a disputed state between the two. They are the three factors of the problem. You cannot have the decision over the heads of people of the Kashmir who are vitally concerned in the matter; and you have to look to the feelings of India and Pakistan, you have to create a congenial atmosphere in the whole area.

Q. You just talked about the formula which could be sold by the concerned parties to their constituents. Is there any formula in your mind which could be sold by the three parties?

You see if there is a dispute between two parties there are two ways of resolving the dispute. By force. Either you win or I win. That is not a permanent solution. That is for the time being. Another way is by a peaceful approach, sitting together. I understand your difficulties and you try to understand my difficulties. You try to satisfy me how to meet these difficulties and then something emerges. There is nothing difficult in the word if you have the will.

Q. President Ayub Khan has said in his book "Friends, Not Masters" that you left an impression on him that the future of Kashmir was linked with Pakistan. How far is this true?

Firstly, I do not know whether that book has come to India. I read in the papers which quoted profusely from the book and I read this. He had probably misunderstood some points. I have corrected that impression in my letter to him because there he had attributed something to me which, of course, was not correct. I owed it to my great friend, the departed leader, to put the record straight. I have not read the entire book and I am not here to comment on his views and impressions. That is not my concern. Do you expect President Ayub Khan to say that Sheikh Abdullah has permanently committed himself to India? You know my views. I have not hidden my views. I am a man of that type. I am not afraid. If I am convinced I will say, I will go to Pakistan. That is my right—to decide my own destiny. My own destiny is in my hands. I have fought for India's freedom and we fought for our right to be masters of our own destiny. Now, you cannot deprive me of that right. Whatever sufferings I have had since independence would not induce me to hate India. You may hate me as much as you like, but I feel that India must live, must be strong and must play its just role in world politics. It pains me to see that the India of our dreams is not coming up.

Q. You said that the main factor in Kashmir is the people of Kashmir. Do you think that a greater degree of autonomy will satisfy the people of Kashmir?

It is very difficult for me. It is an involved question but we have to evolve something to satisfy everybody. I am not the only man to satisfy.

Q. Throw some light on your meeting with Mr. Chou En-lai.

I was in Algiers and Chou En-lai suddenly came there one morning. I wanted to know from the horse's mouth about Kashmir, parts of whose area are controlled by India, another part by Pakistan and a portion thereof now is under China also. Naturally, I thought, let me see what has happened. So I had a talk. Chou En-lai said: "Pakistan being in *de facto* control of that area, we thought that we must straighten the border on that side. We talked with Pakistan and we have

put a clause in the agreement that it is temporary; and ultimately when the question of Kashmir is resolved, the matter will again be taken up at the time". Then he talked about India. Next day I reported the whole thing to the Foreign Minister of India through the Indian Ambassador. First, the Indian Ambassador avoided me but I did not avoid him. I gave him in writing and requested him to transmit it immediately to the Foreign Minister. It is only a question of trust. But I got indications that probably my friends in India did not trust me.

Q. You are trying to internationalise the issue.

You have already internationalised it.

Q. In 1964 you met President Ayub Khan. In the beginning of 1965 they made an attack on the Valley. Still is there any positive evidence on which you could say that the people of Pakistan and leaders want friendship with this country?

As far as I am concerned, I am convinced of that. In 1964 I had talks with them. So many friends have visited that country and returned and reported the same thing to me. People on both sides want peace and friendship. That is natural. Millions of people who are on this side have relations on that side and *vice-versa*. You must create that atmosphere. We must force the leaders to act. Leaders are made by the people and it is for the people to rise to the occasion.

Q. According to Badshah Khan, even if India presents half a dozen Kashmirs to Pakistan, it would not be satisfied because it is based on hatred for India. What do you think of this assessment of Badshah Khan?

About this you ask Badshah Khan. I cannot interpret Badshah Khan. He may have his own grievances.

Q. Do you consider China a party to the Kashmir problem in view of her agreement with Pakistan on a part of the State?

China does not claim Kashmir. They have occupied some parts of Kashmir and so the dispute is going on.

Q. The part of Kashmir which is under occupation of China, have you anything to say about that?

That is a part of Kashmir and belongs to Kashmir. You should ask the Foreign Minister about it.

Q. The minority community has lost confidence in the present government in Kashmir. This time due to abduction of a minor Kashmiri Pandit girl and the failure of law and order machinery and also due to police excesses. The girl wants to come back to her mother. Will you help her?

I think you should ask the girl. I do appreciate your sentiments about the matter. As long as it was in my power, I faced the communal onslaught on all sides and 1947 was trying for me, but I did my little bit to preserve the communal harmony. At least I am thankful to God that that spirit still prevails there and despite the onslaught on the other side during this agitation my people were not trapped. At that time there was an onslaught from one side and this time it came from the other side. The people, however, as usual maintained communal harmony. We must try to eliminate those forces which give support to communal forces.

Q. Do you still think that the right of self-determination is a part of the formula ?

Self-determination is a thing which is the inherent right of every man. You exercise the right of self-determination by changing the government. If you like the government, you vote for it and if you don't like it, you out-vote it. We will have to satisfy the urge of the people of Kashmir.

Q. The right has been exercised already by the people of Kashmir.

If that had been exercised, then there would be no dispute.

Q. But the first election was held under your Prime Ministership.

I do not want to go back to those painful events; but we say that India is the biggest democracy in the world and that is probably one of the factors which attracted us. I was the Prime Minister of Kashmir. I had the full support of the legislature; but one fine morning when I was on tour I was surrounded by armed forces' men and handed over a warrant by my own petty police officer. I asked him for his authority on which he was acting in this way against his Prime Minister. Pointing towards the machine guns, he told me that he was acting on their strength. I had no answer to this. Then I begged the President and the Prime Minister to give me a chance to present my case before the legislature and allow me to face the vote of no-confidence. But nothing happened. Do you call that democracy? Everybody who differs from you, you put him behind bars and under the bayonets of armed forces.

Q. Do you realise the sentiment that in Kashmir complete unity should be established first and then you should work for it?

We must fix our objective. The question is, do we really want continued strife between the two neighbours? There may be some people who say: "Well, this way alone we build up India". You have to convince me that this is the only and the right way to build up and strengthen India. Continued strife is not going to benefit India in any way. Twenty years of experience is there. So, it is necessary that we should fix our objective and work for it.

Q. The State is divided now and it is not the fault of the Kashmiri people. This is the aggression by Pakistan without any provocation. Don't you think that this entity should be established according to the desire of the people?

I think so much has been said about the Kashmir problem, so much has been written about it that there is an answer to every point you are raising; but I do not want to

confuse my mind. We have to hear and examine all points of view and then come to some concrete conclusion.

Q. You are meeting the Prime Minister today. If she offers to take you into the Cabinet, would you join it ?

I will gladly do so if it leads to a solution of the problem.

Q. Will it be possible for you to work on a programme for solving the problem in Kashmir with the present leadership in Kashmir and are you going to discuss this with the Prime Minister.

I accept only that man as the leader who commands the confidence of the people. The question is whether they command the confidence of the people. I think there is nobody, including Sadiq Saheb or Bakshi Saheb, who do not want an end to the conflict. They tried their level best. Bakshi Saheb tried for ten years and now Sadiq Saheb has been trying it but without any success. I do not attack their motives. Let us take it that they honestly held that my approach to the problem was not correct, and so they thought that they would be able to end this whole episode. They had their time and probably you were absolutely liberal with them in supplying funds and moral support, and the results are before everybody. Even Bakshi Saheb probably had at least the sense to accept that he could not solve the problem.

Q. If Abdullah comes again in power ?

I have no love for power. I want India and Pakistan as fast friends because I feel that only in their friendship lies the survival of Kashmir.

Q. Could you tell us what is your relation with the existing government of Kashmir ?

As far as Sadiq or Bakshi are concerned, you can understand these gentlemen. We had been colleagues together for years. We suffered together. To them it appeared that probably my approach was not correct and they would be able

to resolve the whole thing. But if they now feel that they have not succeeded, they should re-assess the whole position and help in the resolution of this dispute.

Q. The immediate question is the functioning of the present Government. Will you, in that case, see how this Government can be strengthened so that it can function well?

If they pursue the same policy that they have followed of sending people to jail, of torturing them, how can you support such a Government?

Q. Do you still subscribe to your earlier views on the accession of Kashmir to India or have you changed it?

You must understand that there are lots of misunderstandings or lack of knowledge. I have so often repeated that I stand by every word, but you must understand what I have said and committed myself to. I have never hesitated to say openly that we of our own free will came to you and joined hands with you. Then what happened later on? If you throw out the people, what should be done? We did not come to you to be treated as third-class citizens. We fought for our freedom and honour. You must respect our sentiments. There are numerous friends in India with whom I have worked and suffered. Those associations cannot be cut off. The question is, how to resolve this whole dispute?

Q. Do you think that President Ayub Khan is strong enough to sell to his people a solution?

If the solution is fair and if all the world says it is fair, he, naturally would be in a position to do so. If I were not convinced of that I will say so, openly. But I feel that President Ayub sincerely wants to establish peaceful relations with India. That is my feeling. You may agree or not. Therefore, I am hopeful, provided we approach the problem

in the right spirit. I hope we will be able to achieve it but not at the cost of India's honour. I have given my word to my friend who is no longer there. Never expect from Sheikh Abdullah that he would weaken India and its secular basis or play with the honour of India. Nothing should also be done at the cost of Pakistan. Unfortunately, we may have committed a mistake in the partition of India, but it is a reality now. We should adjust our relations accordingly and live as friendly neighbours, without any mental reservations.

Q. What facilities do you think that the Governments of India and Pakistan and Kashmir should give you with which you would be able to resolve this question? What amenities will help in resolving this particular thing?

Just to help in the creation of a proper atmosphere. They can only help, not to project the views of those people who are bent upon snapping friendship between the two. That is all they can do.

Q. During the past few days the Pakistan High Commissioner was reported to have met you. Did his talks relate to your likely meeting with President Ayub Khan in the near future?

Yes, of course, they did want that I should visit Pakistan.

Q. When are you going to Kashmir?

At present our communications are completely snapped. I do not know when the roads will be clear.

CONSTITUTION NOT ONLY GUARANTEE

For the 26th January—Republic Day—issue of Hindustan Times, New Delhi, Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah gave the following message :

REPUBLIC DAY is at once an occasion for celebration and for some introspection. Celebration is all too appropriate on a day on which the Constitution of India came into force and the Republic was established.

The Constitution of India is truly a great document inspired as it is by the ideals we cherished in the days of the freedom struggle. It reflects the skill of eminent jurists and the devoted care of Jawaharlal Nehru.

The preamble sets out those noble ideals. The rest of the Constitution seeks to give it form and shape by establishing a democratic form of government pledged to carry out the Directive Principles of State policy acting at all times subject to the Fundamental Rights of the citizens.

Respect for the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary; the integrity, of the electoral process, to ensure that legislatures truly reflect the popular will are all sought to be guaranteed. It is not surprising that many other countries have drawn upon this constitution, particularly on the chapter on fundamental rights.

Yet, it must at all times be remembered that the Constitution provides the framework and it is for the men who work it to give it life and meaning. In many ways the provisions of the Constitution have been flagrantly isolated in recent years and the ideals it enshrines completely forgotten.

Forces have risen which threaten to carry this saddening

and destructive process further still. If allowed to work unchecked Indian democracy, India's secularism and India's quest for social justice will all be wrecked.

I therefore appeal on this great day to all to forget petty wranglings and bickerings and to apply their minds to the attainment of those ideals, I am sure that if an earnest and determined effort is made no problem of any nature will prove impossible of solution.

INDIA, PAKISTAN AND KASHMIR

["Mainstream" interviewed Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah. Below is the text of the questions and the replies which were published in its Republic Day issue.]

Q. Would you like to give a message on the occasion of the Republic Day ?

My message on this Republic Day is that the people and Government of India should pledge themselves to implement in letter and in spirit the sentiments expressed in the paragraph which forms the Preamble to the Constitution of India:

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a **SOVEREIGN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC** and to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity;
and to promote among them all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the Nation;

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do **HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.**

Q. What, according to you, are the steps required for bringing about a closer identity of interests and outlook between India and Pakistan?

The fundamental requirement in this behalf would be realization both by the peoples and Governments concerned that their joys and sorrows are largely identical; and in this strategic part of the world, they can effectively play their destined role in world affairs only together. Concrete steps should be taken to so plan the policies, particularly the econo-

mic policies, wherefrom with the passage of time greater and greater inter-dependence would flow. The writers and the press can play useful part by always emphasizing areas of agreement rather than those of disagreement. Free inter-communication in all fields, friendship and cultural agreements, and firm conviction in resolving disputes by dialogue, are other steps which should be taken. Always remember that "closer identity of interests and outlook", as you put it, will be a process and a growth. Therefore patience and perseverance will be a necessary pre-requisite with which we should work.

Q. Would you press for such steps as joint economic projects, joint nation-building ventures, such as the harnessing of major rivers like Indus and Brahmaputra which flow through both the countries?

From my answer to the previous question what you suggest in this one would necessarily flow. With goodwill and determination, you have achieved the Sindh Waters Treaty once considered an un-realizable dream. That should point out the way. In the "harnessing of major rivers" you have a strong point. The untamed and turbulent rivers spell disaster for both countries and for millions of people. I wonder if the future generations will forgive us if we do not collectively control such forces of potential devastation.

Q. Even before a permanent settlement of Indo-Pak understanding Over Kashmir, is it not possible for the two Governments to take certain immediate steps for freedom of movement and trade between two parts of Kashmir, which is bonnd to help the people of Kashmir?

Without cenceding the implied priority of two matters mentioned in this question, I am of the opinion that remedial steps in the case of each will be very useful and helpful in moving towards India-Pakistan understanding and amity. But while tackling the one, for instance, freedom of movement and trade etc. do not please ignore or bypass the other, that is, "understanding on Kashmir". There is no harm in taking up good things simultaneously and step by step. The prevalent suspicions might make the remedial steps in one direction

infructuous if we give the impression that the "other matter" has been put in the cold storage.

Q. Do you think it is possible to start negotiating on matters of common interest first before taking up the basic stands on issues under dispute between India and Pakistan?

I am afraid that what you mention as "matters of common interest", and those which are "issues under dispute between India and Pakistan" overlap. I have already indicated above that you cannot take one and leave the other without destroying both.

Q. You have been asking the India Government and political parties in the country to recognise the right of the Kashmiri people to decide their own future. Would you not like to raise the same point with the Government and parties of Pakistan with regard to the region of Kashmir which is on the other side of the Cease-fire Line?

When I refer to "Kashmir" I have in mind the State of Jammu and Kashmir as it existed on the day of Independence. Therefore, my assertion to concede the right to the people to determine their future, applies to all residing on either side of the Cease-fire Line.

Q. Would you recognise that the Kashmir Valley has received greater attention by way of economic development from the Government of India than the Azad Kashmir area from the Government of Pakistan?

I have no idea as to what the Government of Pakistan has spent on the development of Azad Kashmir. When I was there in 1964 I had no time to tour the Azad Kashmir area for known reasons. As regards what the Government of India has spent on this side of the Cease-fire Line, I can only say that the Government did provide huge amounts, more particularly since 1953. I need hardly point out today whether these large sums have gone towards the actual development of the Valley or contributed much towards the well-being of the people. The results are before the Indian people.

Q. You have declared that the Kashmiri people under your leadership alongwith the Indian national movement fought shoulder to shoulder for winning freedom from British Rule. What would you advocote so that the Kashmiri people once again can fight shoulder to shoulder with the rest of India for the establishment of a better social order in the interest of common people? Do you still subscribe to the programme of New Kashmir which the Kashmir national movement had drawn up under your leadership?

Unfortunately, for the last twenty years the position of Kashmir vis-a-vis India and Pakistan has remained unsettled. Its people are subject to divergent pulls by either side. In order to enable them to play their effective role and fight the common battles against poverty, disease and want, the first requisite would be to finally settle Kashmir's own position. New Kashmir is a socio-economic programme, aiming at ending exploitation in all fields of economic, political and social life. It is a basic faith by which I stand and for which in my humble way I have made some sacrifice and have undergone some sufferings. One's ideal in life does not change.

Q. You have recognised the Tashkent Declaration as a step in the right direction. What concrete steps would you advocate to follow up from the Tashkent Declaration?

I think my various statements since my release should provide you with the answer to this question. I want the Declaration, that Charter of Peace, to be made meaningful and purposeful by giving it content concretely.

The root cause which led to the armed conflict and the subsequent intervention by the Security Council as well as the USSR, is still alive and must be effectively tackled in order to give meaning and purpose to the Declaration.

Q. Do you think it is possible to envisage certain common digits at the level of State policy between India and Pakistan?

I have said that friendship treaty, cultural agreements, mutual trade agreements, development of river projects, free

movement etc. are some of the steps which should be taken with a view to establish better relations between the two countries, and the State policies should be so shaped as to implement the steps. Collective and cooperative action in developmental projects could be examined. In due time, some sort of "common market" could be thought of. Friendly tariff policies so as to supplement and complement each other's trade could be evolved. Further on, more cooperative financial policies governing our banks could also be evolved. But all this and more can happen if the principal source of conflict is first of all tackled and effectively got out of the way.

Q. In the days of the freedom struggle and also in the period upto 1953, your relations with the Left forces in India were not only cordial but very close. What would you suggest for rebuilding the same relationship today? Why is it not possible for you to take the initiative in the matter?

No doubt my relations with the progressive forces were cordial, as you suggest. Unfortunately certain sections of the Leftist forces fell victims to misunderstanding about me in 1953. But I feel dust has considerably settled down, and there are indications of a better understanding now. I am doing all that is possible to clear the minds which were clouded by the vested interests who were far from happy with me.

"ORGANISER"

["Organiser" New Delhi, of the 4th Feb. published the following substance of the special interview to its Editor on 30th January, 1968.]

Q. Before the 1952 elections to the Kashmir Coustituent Assembly were held you had said that since a plebiscite was nowhere in sight the Consembly would finally decide the issue of accession.

Yes, I wanted it that way. But the Government of India did not agree. Pandit Nehru became furious. He said he could not back out of an international commitment. India's representative in the U. N., Shri B. N. Rau, also said more than once in the U. N. Assembly that while Indian States had the right to convene a Constituent Assembly each, the Government of India firmly stood by the pledge to hold a plebiscite in Kashmir. Therefore whatever we did or say with regard to Kashmir's relationship with India should be taken as subject to ratification by the people in a free plebiscite.

Q. Something seems to have snapped between you and Mr. Nehru in 1953. Would you like to say how it happened?

In India there were always two trends. While some people wanted a secular State, others wanted a Hindu State. I have no quarrel with the latter. It was a natural reaction to the establishment of a Muslim State in Pakistan. Sardar Patel understood this. He honestly felt that a Muslim-majority State of Kashmir would be a headache in this situation. He therefore assured the Maharaja of Kashmir that he was free to accede to Pakistan. But the Maharaja acceded neither to India nor to Pakistan. When the tribal raids came, he then offered to accede to India. India accepted accession provisionally. We endorsed that decision.

We of the National Conference preferred India to Pakistan because we had a progressive socio-economic prog-

ramme which we could implement only in the more liberal air of India. Actually I left the Muslim Conference and started the National Conference when I found in my tours that Hindu masses were as poor and oppressed as Muslim masses.

Two of our major economic programmes were *zamindari* abolition and debt conciliation. However, as soon as we started implementing this programme, resistance arose. The two measures affected landlords and money-lenders irrespective of their religion. The Muslim vested interests had no supporters in Delhi. But the Hindu *zamindars* had contacts in Delhi. Very soon the two measures came to be mis-interpreted in India as anti-Hindu moves. This was most unfortunate.

Since centuries the peasantry in the State as well as other economic have-nots were deep in debt and money-lenders' shackles had reduced them to complete serfdom. We established Debt Conciliation Boards and laid down a procedure for settlement of debts free from legal niceties which often defeat justice. It was purely an economic measure and communal or caste prejudices had no room in it. In fact cases came to notice in which a Muslim moneylender had proved far more merciless and exacting on his co-religionist debtor than a Hindu *sahukar*. So effective and efficient was the working of these Boards that it won the approbation of Ministers of Government of India. In a short time we liquidated all the debts in which the principal and interest had already been paid. We had a debt-free peasant. Even this purely economic and non-communal measure was misrepresented by the vested interests as directed against Hindus and a deep-laid conspiracy against me was set afoot.

I was dubbed as a British agent, then a communist agent, later on as an American agent. They even protected some of my corrupt colleagues. I wanted to take action against them. I asked Nehruji's permission for the same. But instead of giving me such a permission, they dismissed me and detained me. They even hinted my complicity in the death of Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukerji.

Q. Don't you think you should have instituted an inquiry into the death of Dr. Mukerji ?

But in this affair please remember the background facts. Ban on the entry into the State of J & K was imposed at the behest of Defence Ministry of Government of India, which treated Kashmir as war area. Even I, the Prime Minister of the State, could move into and out of the State only on a valid pass. I made protests against this practice right from the beginning, but in vain. When, however, Dr. Mukerji decided to defy the ban, I asked my Home Minister, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, to consult Panditji and find out what was to be done. I had very great regard for Dr. Mukerji who was my colleague and a friend. Home Ministry decided to arrest him and he was detained in a private house at Nishat. Panditji and Maulana Azad came to Kashmir during these days. I hoped that they would see him, but they did not. I could not therefore go to see him either. I had suggested that he should be sent back to Delhi after he was arrested. This was not done. Bakshi was the Home Minister, in-charge of law and order, and Shamlal Saraf was in-charge of Health and Prisons. Though I do not deny my constructive responsibility for general administration, these colleagues were directly in-charge and I had no contact with the doctor except through them. I did not even get his health reports, until one morning the news of his sad demise was broken to me.

Q. But don't you think you should have ordered an enquiry ? Why couldn't you appoint the Chief Justice of Kashmir to conduct the inquiry ?

In retrospect I feel, I should perhaps. But I suggested Dr. Roy to come first and make a general enquiry. He agreed but did not come.

I principally wished the Centre to institute the enquiry, so as to avoid all misgivings in regard to the impartiality of the enquiry. As the atmosphere was vitiated, even my own Chief Justice would not have escaped criticism, or even blame of partiality from interested quarters. Unfortunately, the Centre did not institute that enquiry.

Meanwhile the conspiracy against me was executed on the 9th August when I was overthrown, dismissed and detained against all canons of justice and good conscience. From jail and even after my first release in 1958 I strongly demanded public enquiry into the cause of Dr. Saheb's death, but nothing availed. Even today if there is any lurking doubt in any quarter, let there be an impartial enquiry and I am ready to bear the consequences.

Q. You have said that the State acceded to India only for the purpose of three subjects—Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications. Don't you see that if this is conceded to Kashmir it will have to be conceded to all other States ?

Not necessarily. Under the Indian Independence Act this special right was given only to princely states.

Q. Don't you think that autonomous states would be a threat to the unity of India ?

If they were not a threat to British India, why should they be a threat to Independent India ?

Q. But don't you think that the exit of the British makes a difference to the whole situation ?

The exit of British has made this difference that the entire defence of the country is now solely in the hands of the Centre while during the British period all the native states had their own defence forces. I would say that all the states could safely be autonomous without any risk of secession. USSR Constitution has given the right to her constituent units to demand secession but history has shown that this right was never exercised. Almost similar is the case with Puerto Rico in U.S.A.

Q. In that case why do you make a separate case of Kashmir ? Why don't you make it part of the larger issue of Centre-State relations ?

What others do is their business. I am doing what I think is good for Kashmir, And I am within my rights to do so,

Q. All States signed the same Instrument of Accession. But you alone insist on "Three Subjects Only". Does this not give the impression that you insist upon it only because Kashmir has a Muslim majority ?

It is for the former Maharajas to say how and why they surrendered their sovereignty. The Sardar was a wonderful man. He used patriotic appeals, cajolery and the pressure of Praja Mandals to line up the Maharajas. My only crime is that while all others bowed down, I didn't.

Q. What makes you think that a solution of the Kashmir problem can be found that will satisfy both India and Pakistan ?

A solution can come if there is the necessary will. Both countries must realise that they have much in common and that they are losing their substance in quarrelling with each other. Without such a realisation there is no hope. The worst sufferer in this war of attrition is the Kashmiri. India is a country of many races and many religions. If Hindus become good Hindus and Muslims become good Muslims, all will be well.

Q. Historical experience is that federations either tend to become unitary or they break up. Don't you therefore think that unless a three-subject accession is enlarged into something ampler, it may lead to secessionist movements ?

No.

Q. There is so much in common between the people of India and Pakistan that peace and amity would render partition redundant. The people in India and abroad who master-minded the partition of India know this. They are therefore not interested in reconciliation. As Badshah Khan has said, for this reason, even a dozen Kashmirs will not win Pak friendship. What do you think ?

Indo-Pak amity should be the cherished objective of all patriots. It is not necessary that this should lead to the merger of one with the other as you seem to imply. India has

friendly relations with her other neighbours like Nepal, Burma and Ceylon, without there being an apprehension of her swallowing them up. Why should Pakistan be singled out? I believe that Badshah Khan was not amongst those "who master-minded the partition of India". Anyhow, it is the duty of every Indian to defeat the designs of those who are "not interested in the reconciliation", as you put it.

Speeches

IDGAH, DELHI

On 2nd January 1968

After release Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah proceeded to Idgah to say Id prayers. Mirza Mohammed Afzal Beg and G.M. Shah were with him. Before prayers, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah extended Id greetings to the mammoth Muslim gathering.

After prayers, addressing the audience Sheikh Saheb said: "I am desirous of such a solution of Kashmir which would not only be acceptable to India and Pakistan but also acceptable to the people of Kashmir".

He further stated that "in spite of long trials and tribulations I am steadfast in my convictions; and have preferred trials rather than compromise my stand".

Sheikh Saheb said that not only the people of Kashmir but six crore Muslims of India were also interested in the solution of the Kashmir tangle. Indian Muslims, he said, were also passing through a critical phase. He appealed to the Muslims to organise themselves because "the strength of the community does not lie in its numbers alone". In this connection he cited the example of Israel and the Arab countries and recalled how a tiny nation like Israel had played havoc with the Arabs.

Sheikh Saheb then dwelt on the necessity of peace in the sub-continent and said that the survival of India and of Pakistan was inter-dependent. He said, "we have sympathy with Pakistan and wish her prosperity, just as we wish India to progress and prosper. Those who abuse Pakistan do no good."

“No one can divide hearts by merely creating new frontiers and by drawing geographical lines”, declared Sheikh Saheb. He further stated that “if Pakistan faces any calamity, India cannot escape its ill-effects and similarly Pakistan will suffer if India undergoes any suffering”.

“Minorities in India and Pakistan”, said Sheikh Saheb, “will not feel secure till the two neighbouring countries patch up their differences and strengthen their relations”. In this connection he gave the example of the riots in Calcutta.

Continuing he said, “I have been kept under detention for 14 years and they have fought a war also; but the situation has not changed a bit. Neither is there any change in Sheikh Abdullah nor has the Kashmir problem been solved, nor has any of the two countries benefitted”.

Sheikh Saheb expressed his confidence that he would be successful in his sacred mission provided there was discipline and unity. He again referred to the Arab-Israel war and told the audience that it was only due to discipline and unity that a few lakh Jews were able to defeat many crore arabs.

"AS I LOOK TO THE FUTURE"

On 9th January 1968, on the eve of second anniversary of the Taskhent Declaration, the Gandhi Peace Foundation, Delhi arranged a Gandhi Round Table to be addressed by Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah.

Addressing a packed house on "As I look to the Future", Sheikh Abdullah read out the following statement :

Friends,

You have today honoured me by extending invitation to speak on this occasion on the subject "As I look to the Future". I have only to draw your attention to the appalling conditions that surround us in this world of storm and strife and to the urgency of rousing the human conscience to meet the challenge of the hour. Mankind seems to be torn into hostile camps by disputes and dissensions, and in this war-weary world there yet appears no sign of permanent relief from the potential dangers with which the world situation is fraught. On the one hand we see appalling poverty, disease and hunger to which millions of human beings are victims, while on the other unimaginable colossal amounts are poured into perfecting war machines of various countries. The race for armament goes on unabated, and like a vicious circle this race further sinks more and more millions into the abyss of poverty and want. As if the human conscience were completely dead, all round we see preparations in so perfecting weapons of destruction as would totally annihilate human race. The more tragic aspect of it is that even the under-developed countries like India and Pakistan are entering the race recklessly, which may lead not only to their economic but also to their physical annihilation.

In a situation like this may I ask you to ponder as to how Gandhiji would have acted. I have no doubt in my mind

that these policies which we are recklessly pursuing today are the very negation of what the departed leader had taught us.

If we are, therefore, true to him and to his ideals, there is no time to lose in rousing and consolidating public opinion in order to bring all possible pressure on those who control the destinies of millions in this sub-continent, for abandoning the path of destruction and taking unswervingly to the road that will lead to peace. Therein alone lies our survival.

Tomorrow we shall be celebrating the 2nd anniversary of Tashkent Declaration to which I made reference in my last Press Conference on 4th January. That declaration gives us an opportunity to renew our faith in the principles by which Gandhiji stood. Had he been alive today, I am sure, he would have whole-heartedly not only welcomed the declaration but actively worked for its success. Pardon me to say that after the first few initial steps, only lip service has been paid to the spirit of that charter of peace. We must make a solemn resolve for bringing about lasting friendship between India and Pakistan, realising full well that such relationship is vital to the survival of both. Therefore, with abiding faith in the Gandhian principles, we have to remove all causes of friction between the two countries and find solutions for their problems, that are honourable to all concerned.

As long as the present tension between them lasts, there will be no peace for Kashmir either. With two big armies facing each other along the ceasefire line, any small incident may spark off a big conflagration whose disastrous consequences are too grim to describe. Because of this direct confrontation of the two armies on our soil, in every item of the Tashkent Declaration, Kashmir has a vital stake. I have no doubt in my mind that given goodwill and good faith a solution acceptable to both countries, as also honourable to the people of Kashmir, can be evolved through a frank and purposeful dialogue between the concerned parties. Such a solution may take time, but with patience and perseverance

the much desired object can be achieved. This will bring the two big neighbours closer and help cement the bonds of friendship and good neighbourliness between them, thus help realise the dream of Gandhiji. God-speed.

Then followed questions and answers ; and as 'Hindustan Times' puts it, "Sheikh Abdullah dealt with them tactfully and in fact swayed the audience....."

It is regretted that a detailed report is not available.

TO KASHMIRI BUSINESSMEN IN DELHI

(Substance of the speech delivered by Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah at a reception given by the Kashmiri business community in Delhi at Ashoka Hotel, on January 14, 1968)

Referring to the history of Kashmir, Sheikh Saheb said, "The people of Kashmir have for long been subjugated on account of their own disunity and disruption, lack of faith and other weaknesses. In 1931, however, we took a pledge that the people of Kashmir, being the arbiters of their own destiny, would shape their own future. At that time the Maharaja's government used to tell us that they had purchased us for 75 lakhs of rupees (from the British). This was in a way a fact. In 1846 Maharaja Gulab Singh had paid seventy-five lakh rupees as the price for Kashmir. But we resisted this claim and asserted that we were not mere chattel to be sold or bought. We are masters of our own fate and self-determination is our inalienable right."

"About this time the voice for freedom in India was being raised, and when we gave the slogan for freedom, six hundred and odd princely states also fell in line".

Arbiters of our Fate

"I was not in agreement with the partition of the sub-continent. In fact, I was behind the bars then; I was released on 29th of September 1947 (the partition having taken place on 14th of August). Pakistan wished us to join them, but both the dominions were then aflame (due to communal carnage). The future was vague and uncertain. We sent our emissaries to Pakistan in order to assess whether we should accede to India or Pakistan or stay independent. But the communal atmosphere was foul, and we wanted to gain time so as to see in what shape either dominion would emerge and then decide accordingly. And we also stipulated

that in any case Kashmir should retain her internal autonomy, and that all its inhabitants Hindus, Muslims, Christians and the rest, should have unrestricted freedom to settle their future. Unfortunately, Pakistan at that time refused to accept this position; but we stuck to our stand. Every Muslim and non-Muslim of the State is a part and parcel of Kashmir, and he cannot be deprived of his right. We shall resist any encroachment on that right with full force. Pakistan then accused me of many things. They even called me a traitor, but before my God if I am not a traitor, it does not harm me what anyone says”.

Temporary Accession

“About that time there was the the trouble of the tribesmen, which is known to every one of you. The Maharaja then asked for aid from India (to meet the trouble). He thought that the State being surrounded by four countries—Pakistan, India, USSR and China, who touch its borders—the State should remain independent for which there was scope in the partition scheme. That request for aid could not be accepted as, according to India, there should be some sort of legal agreement between India and Kashmir before military aid could come. In these circumstances an Instrument of Accession had to be executed by the Maharaja. I insisted that the accession should be temporary, and in due time should be subjected to ratification by the will of the people, so that the final decision is to be taken by the people. Sir Gopaldaswamy Ayyanger (leader of the Indian delegation in the United Nations) made this position amply clear in the Security Council, and thereafter Pakistan also fell in line. Unfortunately with the passage of time, both the dominions got involved and bogged down in details. The dispute was protracted, until one day India announced that Kashmir was an integral part of India, and the question of plebiscite did not arise. We objected to this but were told that as Pakistan had misbehaved, India had chosen this line (of refusal to hold a plebiscite). Thus Kashmiris were punished for the sins of Pakistan”.

No Betrayal of the People

"My grouse is against those conscientious people of the world who interpret the Kashmir question as merely an Indo-Pak dispute, and thus completely by-pass five million human beings of the State. We are not cattle or chattel that we can be partitioned and divided. We are human beings, with emotions and aspirations. A human force is capable of facing trials. No military power can deviate us from our determination, nor can repressive laws suppress us in our resolve. It will be only on my dead body that I can be stopped from my determination. On different occasions, different temptations were held out to me, but I have withstood them on the plea that if my people suffer humiliation, it is no use showing respect for me. Even today money and position are offered, but thank God, my faith does not waver. It is my conviction that power and strength come from adherence to truth and that all courage in me is the result of the trust given to me by the people. I cannot betray them. It is impossible.

"You should develop the habit of struggle, and resolve that even if five million people are sacrificed, you will not compromise the honour and integrity of the people. Freedom was never presented on a platter. It is always achieved through conviction and faith. Remember that life without honour and freedom is not worth living".

"Our present plight is the legacy of our past, the result of our own lapses and misdeeds. If we want to achieve our rightful place, we can only do it with our character and good action. If you stand up with faith and face troubles and tribulations, the Almighty will always help you through. God bless you."

AT A RECEPTION, DELHI

On January 17, 1968, Jamiatul Ulema Hind, Delhi Branch, held a reception to meet Sheikh Abdullah at the Chelmsford Club. In mixed gathering of leading citizens and ulemas, Sheikh Saheb thanked the Jamiatul Ulema for their hospitality and warmth.

Replying to their address of welcome, presented by Mufti Ziaul Haq, he said that he was aware of the problems of the Indian Muslims and in spite of his preoccupations with Kashmir problem he was fully posted with the difficulties and critical situations faced by the Muslims of India. Every Muslim, he said, desired that he should have positive leadership who would help them in achieving a place of honour and dignity in India. "We are also eager to find out ways and means by which they could achieve that goal. But my considered advice is that you should stand on your own legs and not look to others to help you".

Self-analysis

Sheikh Saheb advised the Muslims to have self-analysis and find out their own weaknesses and shortcomings instead of all the time finding fault with and criticising the Hindus. "When you build up your own character and overcome your own shortcomings, then a clear and better picture will emerge", counselled Sheikh Saheb.

"In your address of welcome you have invited me to serve the whole of sub-continent. I agree with this but first of all I have to attend to my own people and my own land where I was born. How can I succeed in the sub-continent if I fail to put my own house in order and build up the character of my own people?"

Regarding leadership of Indian Muslims, he said, that they

did not require him or any other person to lead them as they had the Holy Quran and life of the Prophet before them which were the best guides. "If you do not follow the teachings of Holy Quran and precepts of Prophet Mohammed (Sunnat), then millions of Sheikh Abdullahs cannot solve your problems. You need not look up to any prime minister, president or any party but you should peep in yourselves. True following of Quran and Mohammad can bring about revolution and they have brought about revolutions in the past. The path has been shown to you and the path is there, quite clear and visible, and it is up to you to tread it. If you can daily practise introspection, early in the morning at prayer time, for only half an hour, and analyse your acts in the light of principles laid down in Holy Quran and 'sunnat' then all your worries will vanish and your problems will be solved."

Solve Mutual Disputes

Referring to the present situation in India he said that he sincerely believed that almost all the difficulties, whether political, economical or social, could be solved if India solved her disputes with her neighbours. Due to these disputes billions of rupees had to be spent. "But alas !" said Sheikh Saheb, "our leaders instead of solving the basic issues waste their energies in superfluous matters. I honestly believe that majority of our problems could be solved if we normalise our relations with Pakistan and solve mutual disputes."

Appeal to Hindus

He said that long before the idea of Pakistan was conceived all the great leaders including Mohammed Ali Jinnah had visualised a united and prosperous India. Then why did they change ? He asked the Hindus to have self-analysis and enquire from their own-selves as to why Pakistan came into existence. "Scores of people are still alive who can tell you the part played by Mohammed Ali Jinnah in Indian politics and he was considered as one of the top-most national leaders. Jinnah Hall is there in Bombay which tells its own story. Then

there were Maulana Mohd. Ali Jowhar, Shaukat Ali and scores of other Muslim leaders who had made sacrifices for the freedom of India and worked for its greatness. All were then working hand in hand and for the same goal. Then why were they frustrated and separated from us ? It is up to the Hindus to pounder over the causes. It would be a great service to the country if Hindus, instead of finding fault with others, correct their own mistakes and overcome their own weaknesses. Pakistan was the result of a fear complex among the Muslims. Rightly or wrongly they thought that they would not get justice from their elder brother. Now it is up to the elder brother to think over the causes of the fear complex and remove it."

Sheikh Saheb said that against their wishes the country was divided and they had to pay a heavy price for that. However, it was now a reality but it did not mean that a line on the land must be followed up by crossing of hearts. In his view partition of the sub-continent was like construction of two separate rooms in one mansion which was necessitated due to quarrels between two brothers. Similarly, Indian sub-continent was one unit and God had made it so. "You cannot change the fact of geography, you cannot bring Himalayas in between India and Pakistan".

Security of the sub-continent

According to Sheikh Saheb, the sub-continent being one unit, its defence was not possible if the two countries looked towards two different directions. He believed that the two countries were complimentary to each other as their rivers flowed into one another and their climatic condition was the same. "If fire engulfs the house or earthquake shakes the mansion then both rooms would be doomed", warned Sheikh Saheb.

Sheikh Saheb further said, "The experience of last twenty years is before you. Instead of making progress both India and Pakistan have become satellites of major powers. We the people of older generation, when fighting against a tiny nation

of Englishmen who were ruling fifty crores of Indians, had a bright image of independent India and to achieve that image hundreds of youngmen had sacrificed their lives. Can you forget Bhagat Singh and prisoners of Kakori? Is the present situation of the country real image of freedom fighters? The new generation may not appreciate our dreams because they have only witnessed fratricide.

Indo-Pak Relations

“Some people say that idea of Indo-Pak amity is good and they also desired the same but Sheikh Saheb forgets one point that even after the Kashmir dispute is solved, Pakistan would continue to abuse us because its conception is based on hatred. They ask me as to how to remove that suspicion”.

Sheikh Saheb said that “there are different ways to remove a certain thing. If you agree with me that fear complex was the cause of creation of Pakistan, then remove that fear by acts and deeds, not by mere words and wishes because wish is one thing and practical politics quite another.”

Communal Behaviour & India's Integrity

Referring to the Jan Sangh, Sheikh Saheb said that he did not hate them and “if they honestly think that a powerful India was possible only when the Muslims are squeezed out, as they had taken Pakistan, then they can enact more Ranchis, Rourkela and uproot the Muslims wherever they are in some strength. Then the Muslims will either leave India or they would become like Harijans. But our duty is to convince them logically that such a policy of theirs was wrong. In twentieth century it is impossible to annihilate six crores of people. Follow up of such a policy would not finish the Muslims but on the other hand it would shatter India's integrity and they want to kill the Muslims for the very integrity of India!”

Reverting to Indo-Pak amity he said: “For twenty years hatred is being reciprocated with hatred and the results

are before everyone. Now please for a while change this course and reciprocate hate with love and see the results. You yourself concede that masses of India and Pakistan have no hatred towards each other and it is only a group of top men which indulges in all this. The ground is fertile and must be taken advantage of. If you treat their co-religionists in India with fairness and generosity then Muslims in Pakistan will be compelled to revise their attitude and they will think that their fears were baseless. This will have tremendous effect on other side and the walls of hatred and suspicions will fall. Hatred cannot be removed by force or by 'danda' but only love can overpower it. As a Muslim it is my faith, as taught by Holy Quran, that hate should be removed by love and affection. But, alas! This method is not being experimented upon. On the other hand Muslims are being killed and looted in an organised way. What had happened in Bihar and Maharashtra is known to every one. Do you realise what reaction it creates across the border? Instead of removing their fears you are justifying them. They would be justified in asking me, 'Did we not warn you not to trust India?'

Cure of Communalism

Referring to his meeting and discussions with Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Sheikh Saheb said: "After long political discussions with Jinnah Saheb I told him that unless I was convinced I will not accept the two-nation theory. When I took leave of him he said 'I am in the age of your father and have greyed my hair in politics. One day you will say that Jinnah was right'. I said you might be correct but my mission is to change the course of the tide of hatred and to surrender before it would mean death of humanity. I told him as a Muslim it was my duty to work for the humanity. Though there are certain weaknesses in the Hindus yet as a doctor it is my duty to try to cure them. In spite of grave condition of a patient a doctor tries his best to revive him; different medicines are given to him as they suit him. A doctor does not inject poison to a dying patient, he does not beat him. I also told him that even among the Hindus there are great leaders like Gandhiji who was

abused by a section of Hindus, and a thinking section who are aware of their weaknesses and were trying to remove them. Escapism was no treatment of the disease. However, what trials we have undergone is known to us. The people across the border ask me 'Where is that democracy and rule of law'? We tell them that 'obstacles do come in the way and how could we change the course of flood unless we face it?'

Continuing his speech Sheikh Saheb said: "Hindu masses were told that Sheikh Abdullah was conspiring against India but in spite of a campaign of vilification against me and in spite of spending of millions of rupees in disfiguring my image amongst the Hindus, today when I look to their face, I don't find anything except expressions of love and affection. This proves that truth has strength and truth will triumph in the end."

Referring to the statement of Mr. Balraj Madhok, Sheikh Saheb told the audience that he knew him well and did not want to reply to him. His only wish was that may God grant him wisdom and show him the right path. He said "Madhok Saheb says he belongs to Kashmir. In 1947 he is reported to have played a very dirty role in Jammu. In those critical days when we were protecting the lives and honour of our Hindu and Sikh brethren he stabbed us in the back by fanning communal disturbances. Nevertheless we did not lose heart and crossing over the river of blood of our brothers, we came to Gandhiji and joined hands with him. It is regrettable that he has presented that deplorable character with pride in Delhi and told the people during the elections that what had happened in Jammu was done under his leadership. Warrants of arrest were issued against him but then he fled and took refuge in India. May God show him the path which was shown to India by Gautam, Budha, Krishan Maharaj and by thousands of 'rishis'."

Cool Minds & Warm Hearts

Sheikh Saheb exhorted his audience to keep their sentiments under check and to keep their minds cool. The heart,

he said, must be kept warm as they have to turn the tide. The mistakes committed in the past should not be repeated.

Concluding his speech he said: "My services are at the disposal of the whole humanity and I will do my best to serve all. The whole sub-continent is my 'watan'. Regarding my nationality, I have cleared the position. But no one can say that I don't love India which includes Pakistan. I have some love and regard for a poor Hindu of Madras as I have for a poor Muslim of Bengal. We desire supremacy of humanity. The world is sick of petty squabbles and wars and there is a desire for world Government. Muslims have this background because they believe that 'every country is my country as God is the creator of all countries'.

AT ALIGARH

On the invitation of their old friend and colleague, Prof. Syed Mahmud Hasan, the former Registrar of Muslim University, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah and Mirza Mohammed Afzal Beg, paid a visit to Aligarh on 19th of January. After 'Zohar' prayers Sheikh Abdullah addressed a huge gathering, mainly of students of the University. Many prominent citizens were also present. He recited the following verse of Iqbal: "Uraye kuchh varq lala ne, kuchh nargis ne, kuchh gul ne; Chaman men har taraf bikhri hui hai dastan meri".

The Sheikh said: "I am grateful for your sentiments of affection. My story is long and it is not only known in Pakistan and India but throughout the world. I have been the student in this University from 1928 to 1930 when I received the degree of M.Sc. in Chemistry here. Consider me as your brother, as I have been intimately associated with the Aligarh atmosphere and I feel great pleasure to be here.

Road Side Incident

"While I was entering Aligarh town I was confronted by a few youngsters who were about 20 in number. They stopped my car and told me with due respect, 'We are prepared to receive you, Sir, but declare your nationality first. Are you or are you not an Indian?' My colleague Mr. Beg told them 'Do you want to settle our citizenship on the roadside? We have come to Aligarh and shall tell you at leisure while we are here. Please do come to listen to what we have to say'. The youngsters accepted this. I want to tell you and those young friends that the country was partitioned by the Congress and Muslim League. I was in jail then. But top men agreed to partition, and decided that Muslims should have a separate homeland. This brought into being two independent sovereign States, but nature has made India and Pakistan one sub-continent."

Fear the Basic Cause

"I want to tell those young friends of mine who stopped

my ear that before questioning my nationality, they had better place the Himalayan mountain in between India and Pakistan. It would then be possible for me to identify the part of the sub-continent to which I belong. If you allow yourselves to suffer from prejudices you cannot think freely. We were opposed to the two-nation theory. The Muslims got apprehensive of getting justice at the hands of Hindus, and the British wished that they should not unite. But the Hindu today feels aggrieved as to why the country was divided. I appreciate that sentiment, but let them realise as to why the majority of Muslims fell away from us. They will get the proper answer if they ponder over this. I can also understand the sentiments of those who wish to reunite. But the Hindus here should on the proof of their own action show if they have created a place in their hearts for the Indian Muslims. We see that Musalmans are being slaughtered. Forces are still there which desire to push out the remaining Muslims from here. Hundreds of Musalmans were done to death in Ranchi; you have power, and perhaps the backing of administration. But the Muslims seem helpless, relying on their God only. I warn that you cannot finish away the Muslim community like this. These oppressed and harassed Musalmans here, they provide a justification for Pakistan to say "Are you, Sheikh Abdullah, satisfied that we were right in our view that Hindu will never be-friend you"? Those who want to create 'Akhand Hindustan' can never do it by killing Muslims."

Past Blunders

In a reference to Mr. Jinnah, Sheikh Saheb said, "The Qaid-e-Azam was a great nationalist and a courageous leader. He fought against the British. The top Indian leaders had great respect for him. But just think as to why he cooled away from us. Such thinking will help identify your own lapses. Another great leader was Dr. Ambedkar who played a distinguished role in framing the Indian Constitution. In the Congress circles he enjoyed great status and respect. Even he fell away from the Congress. He was driven to the extent of embracing Buddhism along with thousands of his followers. Why did this happen? The answer is in your actions,

“I have studied the Hindu philosophy and read the Gita and the Vedant. Hinduism stimulates high thinking. Gandhiji who was a great leader, left behind him the deep imprint of his love for truth and high character, but would you assess your own actions ?

Our Free Will

“We came to India of our own, nobody bribed me, nor did the Government of India compel me. When the frontier tribesmen entered our State and were within a few miles of Srinagar, we established contact with Indian leaders, on the basis that as soon as conditions were normalised, we shall by exercise of our own free will settle finally our relationship with India or Pakistan, or decide to remain independent. You will recall that the Moghul, the Sikh and the Dogra rulers had made Kashmir a pleasure hunting ground. Actually they had no love for the people of the place. They only used them to satiate their lust for luxury. Our ancestors, no doubt, committed mistakes, and we are paying for them.

Sovereignty of the People

“In my early boyhood, I had resolved to struggle for freedom. Accordingly along with my companions I came into the field in 1931. The anchor-sheet of our movement was : Sovereignty does not belong to an individual, it vests in the people at large. Irrespective of caste or creed, it is the people who are sovereign. Every Kashmiri has a right to live a life of honour. The Indian National Congress, its leaders, supported this stand. In fact there was identity of objectives between the two and our movement gathered momentum not only in Kashmir but throughout the princely states in India.

“In 1947 these princely states were given the right either to accede to India or Pakistan or stay independent. But when conditions in Kashmir deteriorated the Maharaja fled from there. India and Pakistan were then at loggerheads, being involved in the fire of communal frenzy. Mr. Liaquat Ali

Khan the Prime Minister of Pakistan had claimed that country had been divided on religious basis (and therefore we as Muslims automatically should join Pakistan). But we could not accept this, because we were not mere cattle and would not allow ourselves to be driven here or there by anybody. The decision should rest with us, the people of Kashmir. And in that decision not only the Muslims, but Hindus, Sikhs, Christians and others should freely participate”.

Teachings of Quran

“The holy Quran and our Prophet have taught us that we should not inflict harm or injury on our neighbour, that we may even sacrifice our lives if our neighbour is in danger. Our concept of the Almighty is that He is not only the Creator and Protector of Muslims but that of the whole universe. The Prophet is not the source of bliss and blessings to Muslims alone but of the whole world which embraces all. There may be some bad things in Hindu society, but we should reform them with love. We had shaken our hands with Gandhiji, at a time when rivers of blood were flowing. We had come to be your brothers. Those who ask me if I am an Indian citizen or not, they had better enquire of their leaders on what ground I was put in prison for 14 long years. India is a great democratic country, professing high ideals, which had attracted us to Indian leaders. But what have we received in return? Please think of that seriously. India and Kashmir once stood for one principle. Pandit Nehru had declared both in the Security Council and the Parliament that it is the people of Kashmir who have the right to decide, and that the army will stay in Kashmir only until the order is restored. I had come to you as your brother, and what brotherly treatment have you meted out to me”.

Breach of Faith

“No one can produce any proof that I ever let down India or proved faithless. Without framing any charge against me, I was put in jail for 14 years and bullets were shot on my

companions, those who had shouted Gandhiji's and Panditji's slogans. Through your own actions you have shown that neither honour, property nor person of the people is safe (in Kashmir). You will not forget that Pakistan had branded me as their enemy No. 1 and had put a price on my head. But I thought you as my brothers and had expected human treatment.

Obstruction in Settlement

"With us the biggest 'jihad' is to confront an oppressive ruler with what is truth. It is alleged that Kashmir Constituent Assembly has settled the question of accession with India. The allegation is untrue, because what the Assembly settled was done when I and my colleagues were clamped in prison, and whoever participated in the Assembly did so under intimidation and duress and bribery. You thus yourselves do not allow to settle the question of nationality.

"The accession between you and us is temporary. It is the people of Kashmir who are eligible to decide to accede to India or Pakistan or remain independent. The dissension of the two countries have drained off colossal amount of money. India needs raw jute but can't buy it from Pakistan. On the other hand Pakistan needs coal but does not get it from India. In these tensions hundreds of millions of rupees are sunk in military preparations. Actually they are two countries merely in name. If their hearts were one, outlook identical and were they to march in step with one another, things would be different. It is the bounden duty of every Hindu, Muslim and Christian to help establish friendly relations between the two".

Advice to the Youth

"You youngmen have to hold reigns of this country and raise her status. I am aware of your aspirations. I have only one advice to give you ; be a Muslim, and a true one. Always get guidance from Quran and 'sunnat'. I, then, have no doubt that you will change the fate of this country. You are sixty

million (6 crores) in number. Your ancestors were only 313 who changed the history of the world and shaped the destinies of the people. Repose faith in God and His Prophet, you will then change your destiny also. In India live as true Muslims, following the precepts of the Prophet of Islam, so that, the Hindu brethren are attracted towards you with love and affection.

*! "Ki Mohammed se wafa tu ne to ham tere hain ;
Yeh jahan cheez hai kiya. lauh-o-qalam tere hain."*

AT PATNA

From 23rd to 25th January 1968 Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was at Patna to meet Vinobaji and Jayaprakashji. On 24th evening addressing a public meeting at Gandhi Maidan, which was presided over by Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, Sheikh Saheb said:

“The reason for the present economic distress, poverty and unemployment in the country is that the people in power have misused the resources of the country. The resources are there and in plenty but their major portions have been spent in procuring and manufacturing arms and ammunitions. From 200 crores the defence budget of the country has risen to 2000 crores. The natural corollary of this is that the resources necessary for removing poverty etc. have dwindled.”

Indo-Pak Friendship Essential

Sheikh Saheb further said that “rightly or wrongly the country had been divided but geographically India and Pakistan are one. As such their progress and prosperity depend on their mutual friendship. On this basis Gandhiji had said that the partition line drawn on land did not mean that the hearts of the people should also be divided. He had declared that he would devote his life for healing the wounds of partition and would remove the veils dividing the hearts of the people.”

Sheikh Saheb stated: “In his last days late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had also realised this fact. After Chinese attack on India Panditji felt that without friendship with Pakistan the freedom of both the countries would be jeopardised and with this aim in view he had sent me to Pakistan. But death removed Panditji from amongst us,

“Due to strained relations both the countries have become satellites of big powers and none is free in real sense of the word. For real freedom friendship between the two countries is essential,” said Sheikh Saheb.

Causes of Partition

Referring to the causes of partition of the country, Sheikh Saheb said, “the minority had felt that they won’t get justice in this country and so it demanded a separate homeland. I respect the sentiments of those who talk of uniting India and Pakistan but such sentiments are not enough. The causes that brought partition should be removed. The minorities in India should be assured of complete protection of their life, honour, property, culture, language, religion, etc. It is thus that Pakistan could also be convinced that those apprehensions and suspicions which had led to partition had been baseless.”

Appeal to the New Generations

Sheikh Saheb appealed to the new generation of India to come forward and rectify the wrongs committed by their elders because the greatest sufferer of Indo-Pakistan tension is the new generation. Unless and until the resources of the country are properly used the new generation will not prosper and the country’s economic ills will not be cured. Tears fill our eyes when we see that even after twenty years of freedom the people are facing starvation and are crying for food. Is this the fulfilment of our dream of freedom? Did we fight for such freedom?

Harnessing of Resources

Referring to the drought in Bihar Sheikh Saheb said, “I used to weep in jail on hearing and reading the woes of people of Bihar. On coming out of jail I saw a film on Bihar drought which made me weep again. What have the people of Bihar gained from freedom? They are facing starvation still. Who is responsible for this? The Ganga flows through Bihar and

there is no shortage of water here. But for irrigation there is no water. Then how can crops be sown and harvested? For this poverty and shortage only those are responsible who had ruled the country for twenty years. The prime need of the time is that resources of the country should be properly exploited."

Prosperity of Sub-Continent Inter Dependent

Referring to Kashmir he said, "True that the progress and prosperity of Kashmir is linked with India, but still more basic fact is that the prosperity of India depends on the prosperity of Pakistan and vice versa. This fact has been proved to the hilt by the war of 1965. War did not avail anything either to India or to Pakistan. On the contrary, both the countries suffered loss of billions of rupees and became laughing stock before the world."

In the end Sheikh Saheb urged the need of a determined leadership who could take out the country from the present morass.

"Today the country needs a leader with dynamicism and courage, who could salvage the sinking ship and bring it to the shore." He fervently appealed to Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, who also addressed the meeting, "to jump into the active politics in order to perform the task of saving the country."

AT DEOBAND

On the invitations of Jamiatul Ulema and Darul Aloom, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah arrived in Deoband on 28th January. He was given a rousing reception by the students, citizens and the dignitaries of Darul Aloom.

(Addressess of welcome were presented to him on behalf of Darul Aloom, the Jamiat and the students.)

Speaking to the gathering at Darul Hadis Sheikh Saheb said : "I have been immensely pleased to come here and meet you. Perhaps you cannot adequately assess the joy that one, who has some knowledge about the religion of Islam and its teachings, feels on his arrival here. I must, however, clearly point out to you that all the expectations that we have about this institution are not fulfilled. Here was a model for shaping the lives of the people in accordance with Islamic culture. It is, therefore, that students produced by this institution would present the example of that Muslim culture. On the advent of the Prophet (May Peace be on him) of Islam, Arabia was in the grip of ignorance and superstition. But you know the height that those people achieved after their association with the Prophet. They presented an example of perfection in politics, religion, philosophy and the rest. On the students of Darul Aloom you should insist that they thoroughly study the life of the Prophet, and not confine themselves only to the study of Quran. The Holy Book, time and again, points out that perfection in life can be achieved by following the example of the holy Prophet. Should you, therefore, shape your lives according to that model, you will then achieve the place of honour that Musalmans deserve. The world judges Islam by the example that Muslims set in life, by their conduct and character. They do not study Quran, nor do they know who was Prophet Mohammed. It is, therefore, all the more important that this institution works like a factory that produces the muslim generation on the model of "sunnat".

Build Your Character

‘I have come across many Christians and Hindus who thoroughly study Quran but what we have to see is as to what example is set by those who teach Quran and ‘sunnat’ to others. What is their own conduct and character in life. It is one’s own action alone that leads him to hell or heaven.

*‘Amal se zindagi banti hai, jannat bhi jahanam bhi ;
Yeh khaki apni fitrat men na noori hai na nari hai.’*

In that view of the matter, the basic point is our own action. A teacher should in the first instance shape his own life according to that model, and thereafter prepare his pupils accordingly. It is unfortunate, however, that we do not assess and evaluate our own life and actions. We seem to have forgotten the Quran and the Prophet and the life of our community is full of shortcomings and lapses. It is an inviolable law of God that when His commandments are violated that such community is replaced by another people.

“Very recently the instance of Baitu’l – Muqaddas has come to light. That was the first Qibleh of the Musalmans. We have lost it. The confrontation was between a tiny community with a small territory (Israel) and millions of people with a vast territory. You have seen the numbers and the territory did not avail. Why? The short answer is that we have deviated from the path that was set for us. We judge everything according to our personal motives, and even change the meaning and sense of the Holy Quran as it suited our purpose. So, therefore, we must set right our actions if we want to end our misfortunes.

Follow the Prophet

“This institution of yours has a glorious role to play. Consider for a moment the example of Khwaja Moeenuddin Chishti. He had no material resources, no power and neither a favourable environment. But he changed the entire shape

of things wherever he set his foot. His whole asset and source of strength was the holy life of the Prophet.

“India has faced many misfortunes and many tragedies in the past but a people with courage and strength always overcame misfortunes. This institution is a beacon-light and from this lighthouse rays are shed out and light is spread. That should enlighten us. Remember and keep alive the lives of the founder and outstanding personalities, Maulana Mahmoodul Hasan; Maulana Nanotovi, Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madni, and judge your own actions in the light of theirs.

Unite

“I have come out from jail recently after 14 years, and have taken a general view of things since. Unfortunately, it has pained me. You do present the Holy Quran but not the character and conduct which it teaches. ‘Do hold collectively and strongly unto the rope (path) of the Almighty’. Is that not the clear command of God? But let the Muslim scholars search their hearts if they have acted upto this. If they have not what lessons of unity can you give to the world? Remember in the battle of Badar the Muslims numbered only 313. They had no armaments, nor power nor pelf. But withal they changed the entire shape of things. They possed conviction and faith, and determination and resolve and this was the key to their success. We have lost character that the Holy Prophet and his revered companions had taught us. It is your first duty to unite and become one, and impregnable wall of steel. We still hold to the hope that your Darul Aloom is a fountain-head from which such blissful streams will sprut out that brought into being men of eminence like Khalid bin Walid and Omer Farooq. Should you do that, you will soon realise that your institution will become a shinning star in the Indian horizon.

Your Obligations

“Remember two principal things: your duty to God and obligation to mankind. In the latter fall all the duties that we owe to our neighbour. You should ever be ready to suffer troubles to relieve the distress of you neighbour. India is your

motherland. You live here. You have certain obligations towards your homeland. Our religion also teaches us that you should protect your country and have respect for your homeland and in that respect lies your honour. Have you preached this gospel to others? If not, what will a non-Muslim think of you? It is your duty to create this feeling and faith.

Arbiters of Our Own Fate

"The people of Kashmir are determined to shape their own destiny, and they are the arbiters of their own fate. This is not a new resolve. It is inherent in the teachings of Islam. Our work is not confined to Kashmir. The task lies throughout India. We have to heal the wounds that Indian people are suffering from. This healing can be done by love alone and love unites hearts. At the present juncture, it is not processions, demonstrations and slogans that are required. The need of the hour is to think and ponder rationally and that will lead us to the shore of success."

Maulana Mohammed Tayyab, 'Mohtamam' of the institution and Mirza Mohammed Afzal Beg, President of the Plebiscite Front also addressed the gathering.

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Later on, addressing a public meeting in the city, held under the auspices of Deoband Jamiatul-Ulema, Sheikh Saheb said, "It is my duty to remove the doubts and suspicions that had been created in the minds of some of my friends. As such I welcome the questions put to me and I will give my replies. It is up to you to come to the final verdict. I will put before you those facts which have become part of my life.

Problem

"After fourteen years of detention when I came out, some friends enquired of me whether I was an Indian or not. I told them that it was an irrelevant question. It is not the problem before the country. The main problem is the one

which has been a source of friction and anxiety to the country for the last twenty years and which cropped up when both India and Pakistan came into existence. This very problem has compelled both the countries to use all their energies and resources on their respective defences.

Dream Unrealised

“For achieving freedom thousands of youngmen of India enchanting ‘Jai Hind’ had happily walked into the jaws of death. They had dreamt a happy, prosperous and progressive India. But those dreams are yet to be fulfilled and the present situation presents a very depressing picture—totally unrelated to those dreams. It is an irony of the fate that those who had fought for freedom shoulder to shoulder, at the time of independence, quarrelled amongst themselves and the country was partitioned. At that time I was in jail”.

Kashmir : Oozing Sore

“The question of Kashmir’s future affiliation arose. Pakistan put forward its claim. But the Kashmiris declared that only they were competent to decide their future and only that decision would be final and acceptable to them. In short, this oozing sore went on unchecked and uncured. As a result of this the two brothers again started fighting in 1965 and a bloody and costly war was fought. Both the countries suffered losses of billions of rupees and with what result? The situation did not change an inch as it was before the war”.

“You must realise our position. On one side of ours is Pakistan and on the other India and in between the two we are being grinded and being fried in the frying pan. What is the alternative for our safety and security? It is our intense desire that all should live with love and friendship. The friendship between India and Pakistan could be a guarantee for our existence and security. But some people do not agree to this proposition of ours and they do not allow such a thing to take a concrete shape”.

The Economic Plight

“In spite of twenty years of freedom neither Hindu masses nor others are happy. Why? The division of the country is like construction of two rooms in a house in which two brothers start living with separate establishments. But can these brothers live as strangers forever? Similarly, India is one unit and Pakistan is another, but both are complimentary to each other. Many rivers and mountains are common to both and their resources are inter-connected. But, unfortunately, both the countries look towards different directions as a result of which both have been subjugated economically. For economic development both have to beg and borrow from others”.

“Theoretically we are independent for the last twenty years but are we so in the real sense of the word? You must have seen a film on Bihar drought and must have seen starving, weeping and semi-dead skeletons of children and women. Can they be called citizens of a free country? It is our misfortune that even after twenty years of freedom we have not been able to solve our food problem. The resources which could have been fruitfully deployed for increasing agricultural production have been wasted in procuring and purchasing arms and ammunition. Our defence budget has been increasing year by year. The same is the situation on the other side. We have been surrounded by political instability and economic uncertainty”.

The Stark Reality

“Those who are at present masters of our fate spend their energies in clinging to their seats of power and have no time to solve problems of food etc. Then there is language problem which has taken a heavy toll of life of youngmen. These youngmen are being provoked in the name of nationalism. I appeal to these provocateurs to seriously think and ponder over these problems. But you are wasting your time and energy in discussing whether Sheikh Abdullah is an

Indian or not and you relish such a gossip. You should pass sleepless nights on the problems which are eating into the vitals of the country. But you indulge in playing with the sentiments of people”.

Victimisation

“In 1947, crossing the river of blood, Sheikh Abdullah came to you. In those dark days I had seen a twinkling light in Delhi and that was Gandhiji. That weak and fragile human being was raising a voice of truth. We came to Delhi and put our hands into the hands of Gandhiji. But you have punished me in jail for fourteen years. I came to you with love and sincerity and I was convinced at that time that your voice was the voice of truth. But what have you not done to malign this brother of yours? You made me British agent, then American and Chinese agent. The day is not far off when you may call me a Russian agent. You gave me passport and allowed me to go abroad. But in my absence you raised a hue and cry and did not allow me to utter even a single word in my defence. As soon as I reached Delhi airport you whisked me away to thousands of miles and detained me there. You gave full freedom of defence to the person who put Gandhiji to eternal sleep and amidst hundreds of open eyes riddled his chest with bullets. But to me this freedom of defence has been denied. But in spite of these harsh facts I have no bitterness.

Freedom to Decide

“Future of Kashmir is a matter of dispute. Fifty lakhs of people of Jammu and Kashmir will have to decide their future. But you want to force us by use of force. Who will accept that? Our plea is that as human beings we should be allowed to weigh the pros and cons and given freedom to decide our own future”.

Call for Inquiry

“You have charged me with killing Dr. Shyama Prasad

Mukerji in jail. I have repeatedly requested you, from inside the jail and otherwise, to conduct an inquiry into the whole issue. But during this long period of fourteen years you have not done so. Who had stopped you from doing so?" You can do so even now if you like.

"Winding up his speech Sheikh Abdullah said, "Hate begets hate. Only by love can we remove the hatred. You should give practical proof of your good behaviour. You have not treated us well. But I do not complain for that. My only plea is that you should do some introspection and think coolly over the whole matter. You should not put us to more difficulties and trials. I will again say that you have not behaved as an elder brother should do. You should also remember that the voice of truth cannot be suppressed for long".

AT MEERUT

*On 28th January 1968, at Meerut, addressing an open session of the annual conference of U.P. Jamiatu'l Ulema Hind, attended by about 50,000 persons, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah made the following speech which lasted for about two hours.**

"I am thankful to the members of Jamiatul Ulema who have honoured me by extending an invitation to address this august gathering. I am also grateful to you, my friends, for according me and my colleagues a warm welcome. After a very long time I have been able to express my views freely. During the last 20 years of independence I have spent nearly fourteen years in jail. It is difficult for me to take stock of the whole situation in the country in a short time. During all these years many changes have taken place and it is but logical that before forming my own opinion I should study and review the whole situation.

No Retaliation

Before coming here I learnt that some of my brothers were angry over my visit to this city. I have glanced through their posters which they have distributed in the city. It is their right to express their opinion about me and I am not irritated over it. Since 1953 they have been brain-washed against me so what else can you expect from them? You should not lose your tempers and deviate from a standard of behaviour. You should control your sentiments so that you may not commit

*Before Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah arrived in Meerut on 28th January at about 7 p. m., efforts were made to disrupt the Conference of the Jamiatu'l Ulema, where Sheikh Saheb was to deliver a speech. It was reported that some people who associated themselves with what was called "Save Kashmir Front" had approached the Conference premises and clashed with the delegates. The police is reported to have dispersed them after a lathi charge. During Sheikh Saheb's address, however, there was no disturbance at the meeting.

such an act as may distract you from your focal point *i.e.* the Holy Quran and actions of the Prophet. These two things constitute the light-house for your lives. Just as the sailors of a storm-hit ship keep the light-house in view, so you should also do the same. For you the beacon-light is not myself or any other leader, but it is the Holy Quran and 'sunnat' which provide you with that light. Distraction of your attention from this light will wreck the ship of your life. It is vital, therefore, that every action of yours, even every breath of yours, should be in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Quran. In that case alone the ship of your life will weather the storms and touch the shore. You must search your hearts and find out whether this centre is still the focal point and the guiding light of your life? Do you have faith in one God or many others of your own creation? You cannot overlook the commandment of the Quran that you should call the people to the path of God and truth. If you discuss with them with wisdom and perception, it would be the best method. There is no aspect of life on which you do not get light from this source. The life of the Prophet is a model and if you are guided and inspired by this beacon-light, you will never go astray.

"Some young men have objected to my visit. They ask, 'Why has Sheikh Sahab come to Meerut. Meerut has had a brilliant history. The banner of freedom was raised in Meerut a hundred years ago. What is the meaning of bringing such a person, who is undermining this freedom of Meerut and arranging a reception for him? The question is right; because the people who pose this question were merely small children fourteen years ago. They heard and learnt only this thing. I have been a teacher and it is the duty of the teacher to make the pupils understand. Therefore, we should listen to them patiently. My life has been spent in facing storms, I am accustomed to facing such storms. Do not worry. Some of you become worried, which is uncalled for. It is a test of your determination and will, patience and steadfastness. How can you forget it? God puts you to these trials so that you may be tested.'

"I was telling you that the question of those people who have learnt this thing for the last 14 years is right. Why such a person should be called to Meerut, who, in their opinion, is an enemy of the country. The question is whether Sheikh Abdullah is really the individual that has been depicted to them. They can hear the reply today."

Love Begets Love

"Gen. Shah Nawaz, in his welcome address, has invited me to join a Front against communalists. I do not believe in forming such a front. I do not despise anyone. My duty is to make them understand that love begets love and hatred begets hatred. I have to transform their hatred into love. They may throw me away a hundred times but I will embrace them. I have not lost hope in humanity. Most of you might have witnessed the horrible incidents of 1947. Unfortunately, we have been victims of those incidents. The present generation is ignorant of those happenings. We have seen the blood of Gandhiji and of millions of our brothers, sisters and children, flowing. Hindus and Muslims are both were included of this."

Replies to Questions

"I want to reply to the questions that they have put. The decision rests with them. I consider India to be a very great country. I love India because Gandhiji, Gautam Buddha, Ram and Krishan, Mahavir and Nanak and hundreds of Muslim saints were born here. In this very land Khwaja Ajmeri spread the message of love. India has always welcomed everyone. When we study the history of India, we find that kings and emperors abdicated their thrones to fulfil their pledges and covenants. They never violated their word. I want to tell those young men who complain that the Sheikh does not want to become our kith and kin, does not call himself an Indian, hates India instead of loving it. That the Sheikh is the same person who stood by the faint call of Gandhiji which even in those dark days was reaching our ears from

Delhi when killing and plunder were the order of the day in both parts of the subcontinent, when even in his own State his co-religionists were being killed in Jammu, when blood was flowing freely and when Pakistan was knocking at the door of the State. Neither did you invite us nor did you bribe us; but we came to you hearing that voice and fore those ideals and we embraced you.

Price of Brotherhood

"But have you ever realised what price we had to pay for this brotherhood? You put that brother behind bars for fourteen years who had come to you with love and sincerity with all the Muslims. What crime had I committed for which I was imprisoned for fourteen long years? What crime did the Kashmiri Muslims commit for which you riddled their chests with bullets and for which thousands of them you put in prison? Do not ask me to reply to this but ask your own Government. Is this the justice that India can dole out to us? Even to a murderer you give an opportunity to defend. Godse shot Gandhiji and you gave him the fullest freedom to defend himself. But Sheikh Abdullah's only crime was that he came to you when he could have safely avoided you. You prosecuted him but failed to prove any charge against him and then withdrew the case. Your Prime Minister invited me and kept me in his house as his guest. He showed so much confidence in me that he sent me to Pakistan as his representative to improve relationship between India and Pakistan. Even after that you did not consider me your brother. I went for Haj and behind my back you started a campaign of vilification and hatred. Messages were sent to me warning me that I would be again clamped in jail soon after my return here. Many other countries invited me to go to their country. But I refused to do so and I told them that my field was India and not those foreign countries.

"I again came to you; but without giving me an opportunity to defend myself; you shifted me from one aircraft to another at the airport and took me to Kodaikanal, thousands of miles away from Delhi. I was arrested without being

allowed to speak a single word. Strange are your ways of making one your brother! Can you ever make anybody your brother by rushing at his throat? Is this the standard of creating brotherly relationship? You must ask this question of yourself. These young men are not responsible for all these actions. They put such questions to a person who has not committed these acts. As far as we are concerned, our political record and our motives are absolutely clear and clean.

Responsibility of partition

"We were in prison when you divided India. Who is responsible for the partition? And whom are you blaming therefore? We had longed for a brilliant future for India. Who has shattered that dream of ours? Did you ever ask this question of yourselves? You must have asked this from Sardar Patel. The Muslims did not partition India. There would have been no partition if you had not wished so. Can you repudiate history?

"The leaders of Jamiatul Ulema, against whom you are demonstrating today, had undergone great hardships and tribulations for the sake of the country. You should not forget the sacrifices of Sheikhul Hind Maulana Hasan and Maulana Hussain Madni. Today you stare at them with anger".

Whither 'Akhand Hindustan'

"You mislead our Hindu brethren (of the new generation) and shout the slogan of 'Akhand Hindustan'. Those who had visualised 'Akhand Hindustan' in the real sense of the word would not mind this slogan, but have you ever thought as to how you will achieve it. You must think over this question that those who had for thousands of years stayed together and those who in this very city of Meerut, a hundred years ago, put up a united front in the struggle for freedom, why are they torn amongst themselves today? Who is to be blamed for this and what are the reasons? The greatest cause is the fear and distrust created in the minds of the

Muslims. The country however was divided and a wall was raised in between. The house is one but separate compartments have been created.

One India

"Nature had made India one unit and you cannot break it. You had drawn a line across the land but all our problems are common. The two countries cannot stand in isolation. Whether it is water or agricultural production, both the countries are inter-dependent. Both are essential to each other. You do not possess raw jute and that renders thousands of your worker workless. But next door in East Pakistan there is all the raw jute which is exported to Canada and Japan. Possibly from there it is re-exported to India. There is no iron-ore in Pakistan and for her factories she has to roam about the world for iron which is abundant next door in India.

Mutual Friendship

"Therefore it is my plea that without mutual friendship neither can progress. If Pakistan goes down India will not survive. Similarly, if India goes down Pakistan cannot be saved. Not to speak of Kashmir, we also will go down.

Remove Fear

"To have sentiments of 'Akhand Bharat' among the young men is good, but this can only be achieved when we are able to remove the fears from the minds of millions of the people of Pakistan. These fears cannot be removed by what you have done in Ranchi, Rourkela and Maharashtra. On the other hand you strengthen their fears and provide them with a stronger argument with which they criticise you. They tell me 'Sheikh, have you enjoyed the fruits of becoming brothers? You have not only ruined yourself but also your people!' We hear these taunts and bear them. But I am not disheartened by such things because our path is right, and we have full faith in the basic humanism. With this ideal in view we can divert the waves of these thoughts. But this requires determination and unbending faith.

"I enquire from my young friends whether they have ever thought of the treatment meted out to the Muslims in India? Is it strengthening the cause of unity? You will find the correct path on seriously pondering over this question. You complain that Sheikh refuses to be your brother. I am not afraid of speaking the truth and it is essential that you realise the correct position of Kashmir.

Kashmir Dispute

"For the last twenty years Kashmir is the issue of dispute between India and Pakistan. Soon after independence this problem cropped up and has taken thousands of human lives. Two wars have been fought over it, and because of this dispute the people of Kashmir have undergone great hardships and are still facing them. You have seen the bitter war in which billions of rupees have been wasted and thousands of men killed. Seventy thousand Muslims in Kashmir State were uprooted from their homes and hearths. You destroy us with guns and bullets and yet complain that we hesitate to become your brothers! The Kashmir dispute, which has been a constant source of worry to both India and Pakistan, has also ruined the five million people of Kashmir, has destroyed their honour and trade. Have you ever thought over the cause of this dispute?

"While I was in jail I was first dubbed a British agent, then was promoted to be an American agent and I am waiting for the day when I may be labelled a Russian agent. How fertile is your imagination! For me such charges have no value.

Word of Warning

"But I want to warn the young men that the people who are misleading and provoking them have no love for India. For them the slogan of 'Akhand Hindustan' is a mere slogan and they do all this to secure power. They don't bother if hereby India becomes weaker.

"Sheikh Abdullah is a mere human being. Compared to

the whole India my value is nil. If you think that by killing Sheikh Abdullah the honour of the country will soar high, then you can do so and I am prepared to be killed for the hundredth time. If you really believe that by this act of yours India will achieve progress and prosperity then I am ready for the sacrifice.

Fate of Kashmir Undecided

“Fifty lakh people of Kashmir will decide whether they are Indian nationals or not. You say that the Kashmir dispute has been solved. But then what is the point of friction between the two countries? Why do rounds of ministerial meetings take place between India and Pakistan? Why do the Prime Minister of India and the President of Pakistan issue joint communiques about this? The fact is that the fate of fifty lakhs of people of Kashmir has not yet been decided. We are ready to become your brothers but this will have to be confirmed by the people. Though the final disposition of the State has yet to be decided you kept me in jail for fourteen years. But you may as well hang me when it is confirmed. Do you think that by such an act you will be able to suppress the truth? Still there are Muslims who are not ready to play the roles of Bakshi and Sadiq. They are ready to die rather than give up the truth. For fourteen years you have experimented with them and if you like you can do so for sometime more.

Dr. Mukerjee Episode

“The other charge levelled by you is that Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukerjee was killed in Kashmir. Dr. Mukerjee had violated the law of the land and was arrested. In detention he was taken ill and unfortunately passed away. This had shocked us all. Unluckily I was then the Prime Minister of Kashmir. Though the conspiracies were being hatched against me and I knew that I would be arrested, yet I was the Prime Minister and the constructive responsibility was mine. The matter was very serious one and perhaps I was more shocked than you. I had then requested the Government of India to institute an impartial enquiry so that suspicions and doubts could be removed and the person responsible for negligence could be

punished. Though the Government of India had full powers to do so, yet they did not do so. You can argue that I thwarted their attempts to do so but later on I was arrested. Even from the jail I had written to the Government of India to institute an enquiry but this was not done. You must ask the Government of India why they did not institute an enquiry even after my removal from the Government fourteen years ago.

Critical Phase

“Can you solve the problems of the country by making only one person the target of your attack ? At present India is passing through a critical phase and the common man is undergoing great hardships. You must try to solve these problems. Freedom was secured after great sacrifices and the souls of those who had sacrificed their lives are calling upon you to safeguard this freedom. It is easy to secure independence but it is very difficult to preserve it. Freedom has no value if the country is weak economically. Both India and Pakistan demand aid from other countries and the burden of debts is so great that the major portions of the revenue are paid as interest on the loans. Foreign economic pressure is mounting and if this continues at the present rate, then freedom would be jeopardised. Even after twenty years of freedom the people are crying for foodgrains. Dozens of rivers flow in the country but still there is shortage of water and Bihar had to face drought. The reason is that there is shortage of money for irrigation because with this money you purchase guns. It is a cancer which is eating into the vitals of India and the same is the situation in Pakistan.

Germany's Example

“During the second Great War Germany was totally destroyed and bombardment razed all the factories to the ground. But within twenty years they rebuilt everything and today they are again prosperous and lending money to other countries. But during these twenty years of freedom, what have you done, how much progress have you made ? God has given everything

to this land of fifty crores of people but our misdeeds are taking us backward.

“Why do you bother about me? You must care for your country. But you don't bother about your country because it requires deep and serious thinking. India which used to supply food to others is now begging for food from other countries. In certain instances legislative members can be bought over at fifty thousand each and our morality is suffering degradation. A big population does not make a country great but ideals make it so.

Word of Honour

“In 1947, during the war in Kashmir, Pakistan's treasury was empty and they demanded fifty crores of rupees from India which was Pakistan's share. But the Government of India refused to give this amount. Gandhiji learnt about this and he enquired from Sardar Patel as to why that amount was not paid to Pakistan which was theirs, Sardar Patel replied that Pakistan would purchase arms and ammunitions with that money and would use them against us. But Gandhiji told Sardar Patel to transfer that amount to Pakistan otherwise India would be charged with breach of trust and dishonesty.

Historical Developments

“Since 1931 fifty lakhs of people of Kashmir have been fighting for freedom and thousands of young men and old had sacrificed their lives. We wanted freedom and you want to become our masters. Freedom is the birth-right of the people. In 1947 Pakistan refused to accept this right of ours. They told us, ‘Pakistan consists of Muslim majority areas and as Kashmir is a Muslim majority area, it belongs to Pakistan’. We told them that we were not prepared to be their or anybody else's property. The scenic beauties of Kashmir, her women and men had been considered as articles of luxury by the world, and we had taken a pledge that we won't allow them to be so. The conditions then deteriorated and the Maharaja fled from Kashmir.

Protection of Minorities

“Then we asked the Muslims of Kashmir to protect the lives and honour of Hindus and if anyone was found harming the Hindus, he would be dealt with severely. It was a golden era in the history of Kashmir. We gave protection to the Hindu refugees from Muzafferabad area and when they desired to go to Jammu we made arrangements for tongas which took them to Jammu after crossing the great heights of Banihal. But when they were returning they were massacred twelve miles away from Jammu. Only one tongawalla was able to escape who somehow reached us and told the tragic story. You can well imagine the reactions of the Muslims. But with pride we can say that we did not lose our balance and absorbed the shock. We told the Muslims that their neighbours were not responsible for that dastardly act and if they wanted to take revenge, then they should go to Jammu. It is a historical fact that not a single Hindu was touched in Kashmir. You cannot call Kashmiri Muslims and Sheikh communalists.

Provocation

“After twenty years the Jan Sangh has again provoked the local Hindu population. At present about five lakhs of military and armed police are posted in Kashmir and it was impossible for the Muslims to come out of their homes. We again faced the onslaught of communalism and told the Muslims to protect their neighbours and not to molest them as we believe in God Who is the Creator of the whole world. Later on your Home Minister went there and was surprised to see the situation. Why don't you peep into yourself? Why does not Madhok Saheb reflect upon his own activities? He cannot charge us with communalism.

Dangers of Fragmentation

“In present-day India the shooting of men has become the order of the day, whether it is east or west and north or south. Heavy damage is being caused to the lives and

properties. There is a danger of fragmentation of the country. You must give serious thought to these problems and should think of devices to meet these challenges, instead of wasting time and energy in such demonstrations.

"I am grateful to my friends who have made arrangements for my safety and security. I am a tall man the lathi would take some time to reach my head." (Laughter)

Fruitless Vilification

Referring towards the demonstrators, Sheikh Saheb said: "You want to silence us and you have spent millions of rupees in order to disfigure our images. But in Kashmir you have completely failed. You could not destroy my image. The people of Kashmir know me fully well and you have wasted your money in trying to alienate them from me. There is no difference among the Kashmiris about basic points, though there may be differences in approach.

Path of Peace

"A time will come when you will realise the mistakes of your policies. I would have helped you in a time of distress but you have banged the door. It was the last wish of Gandhiji that though the country had been divided but hearts should not be divided and we had started working on that wish. After Gandhiji, Nehru and then Shastriji realised that war was no solution of the problem, and therefore Shastriji signed the Tashkent Declaration. All the three—Gandhi, Nehru and Shastri—had advised the nation to follow the path of peace and this is my humble plea as well. Jan Sanghi and Hindu Mahasabha brothers should convince me that the methods which they have adopted would strengthen India. We honestly believe that such methods would weaken India."

AT DELHI

Addressing the leaders and workers of Jamiatul Ulema at Masjid Abdul Nabi, New Delhi, on January 30, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah said:

“Situations such as created in Meerut (Communal Clash) will have to be faced for a long time. The Meerut incident is deplorable but it is not something new. There are deep purposes behind it. Preventing Sheikh Abdullah from coming there is a minor matter. The persons who did all this in Meerut do not want that the Muslims should unite; they wish to see them divided and dispersed. They think that due to Sheikh Abdullah the Muslims will again get united. The underlying idea is to keep the Muslims confused and divided so that they may be annihilated by clashes among themselves. The question is how efforts of such people can be negated. Our basic need is oneness and unity.”

The way out

“An ordinary Hindu, Muslim or Sikh does not know why the country was divided. Some people did not want to share power with others and wanted to use and enjoy power themselves exclusively. That is why the country had to be divided. The biggest organisation of the Muslims emphatically opposed the partition of the country. Those who claim to be patriots and nationalists today forget what the Muslim leaders, specially Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madni and Imamu'l-Hind Maulana Azad had to face for their opposition to partition. We had not opposed the partition just to please the Hindu but because we thought it to be the right thing to do. Islam is the religion of humanity. Islam does not differentiate between man and man. Muslims call God 'Rabu'l Alamin' (i.e. the God of the whole universe) and not the God of Muslims. Islam teaches complete equity and equality. So, it is clear that the Muslim

cannot become communalist or narrow-minded, cannot cause trouble for his neighbour. Islam does not even permit breaking of branch of a tree unnecessarily. So, our stand was exactly according to the teachings of Islam. It is following the teachings of Islam to protest against such a tendency. The Muslims should create the strength of character. Our action should be according to the life of the Prophet in Mecca. Without army and arms we can become so powerful with the strength of character as were Khwaja Ajmeri and other 'soofi dervishes'. This stray stabbing is sheer cowardliness and we should resist this cowardice not with cowardly acts but with watchfulness and alertness that we do not ourselves plunge into similar dangers. These disruptive and destructive forces are not prepared to tolerate Muslims or any other community. They say that India is the country of Hindus, they cannot tolerate Muslims; they cannot forbear their well-being, dignity and self-respect. Muslims do not like to be dragged to the position of Harijans. But we can face them only with the collective strength of our character. The life of Prophet is the beacon-light. The ship of our life is engulfed in the storm and this beacon-light shows us the way to shore."

Kashmir and self-determination

"For centuries the Pathan, Moghul, Sikh and Dogra rulers had looked upon Kashmir as merely a place to provide luxuries for their comforts and entertainment. Nature has adorned Kashmir with her own hands but its rulers always thought she will satiate their lust for luxuries. As soon as this fact became known to us, we resolved to secure a place of honour for our people. Hindus and Muslims, all were included in this. In 1931 we came to the forefront. We took a vow that either we will get a place of honour to the nation or will lay our lives in this struggle. We raised the banner of revolt against the so-called "Amritsar Treaty" (according to the treaty, the Dogra rulers had purchased the territory of Kashmir from the British). When the country was being partitioned, we were in prison. The Maharaja did not want to accede either to India or to Pakistan but wanted to remain independent,

Therefore, he did not sign the agreement (of accession) with either country. About this time disturbances broke out and the Maharaja was forced to accede to India. Pakistan told me that we should join Pakistan because the country has been divided on communal basis and all the Muslim majority areas have joined Pakistan. I said that the time had not yet come for Kashmir to join either dominion. The picture of Pakistan (or India) is not yet clear. How can we take any final decision until the picture becomes clear and conditions finally stabilise? I made it clear that we cannot surrender our right to shape our destiny ourselves and cannot accede to Pakistan purely on the ground that Kashmir is predominantly Muslim. We cannot let down the 12 lakh non-Muslims of the State. We Muslims cannot tolerate anyone looking at a non-Muslim with an evil design. At the moment there is an autocratic government in Kashmir. Let us first get rid of the autocratic government and then we will take some decision. At this Pakistan threatened us while India supported our stand. This was the basis of the freedom struggle of Kashmir. I discussed this with Gandhiji; he supported this right of the Kashmiris and advised the Government of India that they should come to our help but help could not be given without any legal relationship. So, out of helplessness the Maharaja signed the Instrument of Accession.

The Accession Story

“The Instrument of Accession was considered by a committee comprising of Mountbatten, Shri Nehru, Sardar Patel and myself. The question was whether it should be accepted or not. Firstly, it had been signed under compulsion of circumstances; secondly, there was no time for reflection and negotiation. So, it was decided that when peace is established and normal conditions return, the accession should be got ratified by the people and only after that it should be considered as final. This was the condition of our accession to India. This thing has been accepted and made clear in the statements of Pandit Nehru and other Ministers of India in the Parliament and in the United Nations. When a meeting (in 1953) was

held between Shri Nehru and the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Mohammed Ali Bogra, then also this was accepted in a joint communique and the appointment of chief Administrator for the plebiscite was announced. When the matter lingered on, the people did not get an opportunity to express their opinion, India changed its mind. The Prime Minister of India at a late stage expressed a desire that I should satisfy this through the back door *i. e.* the Constituent Assembly. I got greatly perturbed at this and pondered why I should not stand by my word. This was a moment of trial. I knew that I would be thrown into prison, my family people would be distressed, my colleagues would be shot. But I had faith in God who brought me out successfully in this trial. There were many reasons for our coming to India—not its physical vastness or its wealth but it were her values and ideals which attracted us. We also hoped that with our association we could alleviate the sufferings of Muslims in India.”

Murder of Democracy

“We were stunned at the murder of democracy in Kashmir (9th August 1953). But here in India all kept quiet whom we expected to support our right. India is a democracy and there are democratic procedures for changing a government but army was sent which surrounded my house. A police officer came to me with a warrant against me. He was my employee. I asked him as to who had authorised him to do so. He pointed towards the Indian Army. The correct method of my removal was a motion of no-confidence. This was the way of democracy. I had called the army for protection, but it became an occupation army. Even the assassin of Gandhiji had ample opportunity to defend himself in four courts and then of even petitioning the President for mercy. What was the offence of Sheikh Abdullah who was jailed for 14 years! Against his illegal incarceration not a sole voice was raised. Had a voice been raised at that time against the murder of democracy, then today this spectacle would not have been witnessed in West Bengal, Haryana and Punjab. Unfortunately, my name was Abdullah. Unfortunately, the Kashmiris

were mostly Muslims. So everything was all right there. Its horrible consequences are becoming apparent. The country will be divided into pockets because a compromise has been made with evil. Man is definitely punished for his sins, if not today then tomorrow."

Indo-Pak Unity of Hearts

"In jail I had complete peace of mind. I did not get the peace anywhere as I got in the jail because my conscience was clear. We have no quarrel with India. I do not consider India as an alien nor is Pakistan an outsider. In the life of India and Pakistan is my life. A line was drawn on the earth. It is not necessary that hearts and minds should also be veiled. If this happens, neither India will be saved nor will Pakistan be saved.

Result of Disunity

"The slogan of 'Akhand Hindustan' of these people is merely a slogan which is raised to mislead the people. Had these people really desired a united India then they would have endeavoured to heal the injury of partition, followed the path of love, treated the remaining Muslims with honour, themselves would have protected their rights. Had they given the Muslims a place of honour, the contention of Pakistan that Hindus are narrow minded and cannot tolerate the Muslims would have been weakened. They would have taken the Muslims in their arms with honour and protected their rights. In this way that basis would have slipped away on which Pakistan was created. These people provided the reason for the creation of Pakistan, strengthened their hand and gave a handle to them."

"It is the result of opposition between India and Pakistan that this country is suffering losses. What is this that in Pakistan there are piles and piles of jute while jute factories are located in India. Pakistan sells jute to Japan and India buys it from Japan. There is no coal or iron in Pakistan. It

purchases it from America and China while both those commodities are plentiful in India.

"In this manner the expenses increase which affects the people of India and Pakistan. You people save every drop of blood and collect arms which get obsolete in a couple of years and again you need new arms. Even after 20 years we have not been able to provide irrigation facilities to Bihar, we have not been able to get rid of poverty and illiteracy. Had we spent the money, now utilised for war preparations, on the development of the country, we would have made great progress.

"Our defence budget has increased from 200 crores to 1,000 crores of rupees. Annual increase is additional. Same is the case with Pakistan. Both the countries are under heavy debts. All the revenue of both countries goes in paying back the debts. Why this situation is not remedied? Whoever points out this is dubbed as a traitor. No attention is given to solve the problems of the country but attention is given to such things that the colour of Sheikh Abdullah is black or white, he has come from the east or from the west".

Kashmiris' Objective

"We stand firm on our objective, not only now but ever since 1931. We did not hand over our territory to Pakistan; how can we surrender it to India? We have faith in God. We are on the right path. We are confident that we will definitely succeed. We will fulfil our pledge. We will not permit any game being played with us. In case there are some difficulties, then a way can be found to smoothen them out. It is the right of the freedom of opinion that distinguishes man from animal, and we are not prepared to become animals. The world has accepted our right. It is also the basic principle of the United Nations, we cannot deny it. If one method is not acceptable then another method can be thought out".

Have Faith

"We are in great distress today. I am worried about

disruption amongst you. I wish there were faith in your hearts that you should not fear anyone but God. You should support the truth even if it goes against you or against your dear ones. This is the commandment of God and you should act upon it.

“We will carry on our struggle for the objective ; but we are not unaware of your difficulties. We will not take any such step which might endanger you or increase your difficulties but we will not bow down to blackmail.

“It is the right of Muslims to live in their country. The right of the Indian Muslims to live in India does not depend on the fact of Kashmir’s accession to India. You should stand on your legs. Your stand should be that you would welcome Kashmir continuing with India but if it does not, it is their free will and it is their pleasure. Do not link your right to live as citizens of India with the question of Kashmir’s accession to India.”

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